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# LITERARY INTERLUDES

WADIA AND SETHNA

No. 1-8



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# LITERARY INTERLUDES

*Selections from English Prose of the Nineteenth  
and Twentieth Centuries*

BY

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## INTRODUCTION

**OUR** first consideration in selecting pieces of English prose for our book was literary style. The eastern mind being predisposed in all things of life to expansiveness and embellishment naturally takes to a mode of expression that is ornate and elaborate. As this mode of expression is contrary to the genius of the English language, we chose only those English authors whose writings were at once simple and expressive and consequently eminently suited for the Indian university student to study as models of style.

The second point we bore in mind when making our selections was to see that each piece chosen, besides possessing certain stylistic claims, was on a subject that would be of use to the student in after life. Keeping this view before us and realizing what an important part science plays in modern life, we chose Bertrand Russell's essay on 'The Place of Science in a Liberal Education', and subsequently took two renowned Victorian scientists, Huxley and Wallace, to enlighten him further on the subject.

We naturally wished that the Indian university student should know something of the special and distinguishing feature of a university of long standing—namely, its atmosphere. For this reason we selected Benson's essay to convey to him, as far as words could convey, the subtle and elusive atmosphere of the older English universities. In a volume intended for students, the inclusion of Ruskin's lecture on the



reading of books needs no apology, any more than does Newman's essay on the characteristics of Englishmen so long as the destinies of India and England are linked together. Of these characteristics, the most distinctive is the Englishman's love of liberty. John Stuart Mill's essay 'On Liberty' is consequently included to inspire the Indian student and at the same time caution him that liberty, a fine thing in itself, can easily degenerate into mere licence, intolerance and interference with the freedom of others. The Indian student will have vainly cultivated the art of human liberty unless at the same time he upholds universal peace. Here we know of no better proponent of world peace than Earl Baldwin.

Even when the student has developed the love of liberty and made the ideal of world peace his creed in life, he will not escape the common human destiny of suffering. Never has human suffering found expression in such moving and intimate terms as in Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*. For this reason we have included an extract from that great work. Lastly in a book of English prose designed for Indian students, we felt that at least one Indian writer should have a place in it and the name of Mr Gandhi suggested itself.

Poona  
January 1938

A. S. WADIA  
H. D. SETHNA



# I

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

TIME AND LIFE

MR DARWIN'S 'ORIGIN OF SPECIES'

EVERYONE knows that that superficial film of the earth's substance, hardly ten miles thick, which is accessible to human investigation, is composed for the most part of beds or strata of stone, the consolidated muds and sands of former seas and lakes, which have been deposited one upon the other, and hence are the older the deeper they lie. These multitudinous strata present such resemblances and differences among themselves that they are capable of classification into groups or formations, and these formations again are brigaded together into still larger assemblages, called by the older geologists, primary, secondary, and tertiary ; by the moderns, palaeozoic, mesozoic, and cainozoic ; the basis of the former nomenclature being the relative age of the groups of strata ; that of the latter, the kinds of living forms contained in them.

Though but a film if compared with the total diameter of our planet, the total series of formations is vast indeed when measured by any human standard, and, as all action implies time, so are we compelled to regard these mineral masses as a measure of the time which has elapsed during their accumulation. The



amount of the time which they represent is, of course, in the inverse proportion of the intensity of the forces which have been in operation. If, in the ancient world, mud and sand accumulated on sea-bottoms at tenfold their present rate, it is clear that a bed of mud or sand ten feet thick would have been formed then in the same time as a stratum of similar materials one foot thick would be formed now, and vice versa.

At the outset of his studies, therefore, the physical geologist had to choose between two hypotheses; either, throughout the ages which are represented by the accumulated strata, and which we may call *geologic time*, the forces of nature have operated with much the same average intensity as at present, and hence the lapse of time which they represent must be something prodigious and inconceivable, or, in the primeval epochs, the natural powers were infinitely more intense than now, and hence the time through which they acted to produce the effects we see was comparatively short.

The earlier geologists adopted the latter view almost with one consent. For they had little knowledge of the present workings of nature, and they read the records of geologic time as a child reads the history of Rome or Greece, and fancies that antiquity was grand, heroic, and unlike the present because it is unlike his little experience of the present.

Even so the earlier observers were moved with wonder at the seeming contrast between the ancient and the present order of nature. The elemental forces seemed to have been grander and more energetic in primeval times. Upheaved and contorted, rifted and fissured, pierced by dykes of molten matter or worn



away over vast areas by aqueous action, the older rocks appeared to bear witness to a state of things far different from that exhibited by the peaceful epoch on which the lot of man has fallen.

But by degrees thoughtful students of geology have been led to perceive that the earliest efforts of nature have been by no means the grandest. Alps and Andes are children of yesterday when compared with Snowdon and the Cumberland hills ; and the so-called glacial epoch—that in which perhaps the most extensive physical changes of which any record remains occurred—is the last and the newest of the revolutions of the globe. And in proportion as physical geography—which is the geology of our own epoch—has grown into a science, and the present order of nature has been ransacked to find what, *hibernice*, we may call precedents for the phenomena of the past, so the apparent necessity of supposing the past to be widely different from the present has diminished.

The transporting power of the greatest deluge which can be imagined sinks into insignificance beside that of the slowly floating, slowly melting iceberg, or the glacier creeping along at its snail's pace of a yard a day. The study of the deltas of the Nile, the Ganges, and the Mississippi has taught us how slow is the wearing action of water, how vast its effects when time is allowed for its operation. The reefs of the Pacific, the deep-sea soundings of the Atlantic, show that it is to the slow-growing coral and to the imperceptible animalcule, which lives its brief space and then adds its tiny shell to the muddy cairn left by its brethren and ancestors, that we must look as the agents in the formation of



limestone and chalk, and not to hypothetical oceans saturated with calcareous salts and suddenly depositing them.

And while the inquirer has thus learnt that existing forces—*give them time*—are competent to produce all the physical phenomena we meet with in the rocks, so, on the other side, the study of the marks left in the ancient strata by past physical actions shows that these were similar to those which now obtain. Ancient beaches are met with whose pebbles are like those found on modern shores ; the hardened sea-sands of the oldest epochs show ripple-marks, such as may now be found on every sandy coast ; nay, more, the pits left by ancient rain-drops prove that even in the very earliest ages, the ‘ bow in the clouds ’ must have adorned the palaeozoic firmament. So that if we could reverse the legend of the Seven Sleepers—if we could sleep back through the past, and awake a million ages before our own epoch, in the midst of the earliest geologic times—there is no reason to believe that sea, or sky, or the aspect of the land would warn us of the marvellous retrospection.

Such are the beliefs which modern physical geologists hold, or, at any rate, tend towards holding. But, in so doing, it is obvious that they by no means prejudge the question, as to what the physical condition of the globe may have been before our chapters of its history begin, in what may be called (with that licence which is implied in the often-used term ‘ prehistoric epoch ’) ‘ pregeologic time ’. The views indicated, in fact, are not only quite consistent with the hypothesis, that, in the still earlier period referred to, the condition of our



world was very different ; but they may be held by some to necessitate that hypothesis. The physical philosopher who is accurately acquainted with the velocity of a cannon-ball, and the precise character of the line which it traverses for a yard of its course, is necessitated by what he knows of the laws of nature to conclude that it came from a certain spot, whence it was impelled by a certain force, and that it has followed a certain trajectory. In like manner, the student of physical geology, who fully believes in the uniformity of the general condition of the earth through geologic time, may feel compelled by what he knows of causation and by the general analogy of nature, to suppose that our solar system was once a nebulous mass, that it gradually condensed, that it broke up into that wonderful group of harmoniously rolling balls we call planets and satellites, and that then each of these underwent its appointed metamorphosis, until at last our own share of the cosmic vapour passed into that condition in which we first meet with definite records of its state, and in which it has since, with comparatively little change, remained.

The doctrine of uniformity and the doctrine of progression are, therefore, perfectly consistent ; perhaps, indeed, they might be shown to be necessarily connected with one another.

If, however, the condition of the world, which has obtained throughout geologic time, is but the sequel to a vast series of changes which took place in pregeologic time, then it seems not unlikely that the duration of this latter is to that of the former as the vast extent of geologic time is to the length of the brief epoch we call



the historical period ; and that even the oldest rocks are records of an epoch almost infinitely remote from that which could have witnessed the first shaping of our globe.

It is probable that no modern geologist would hesitate to admit the general validity of these reasonings when applied to the physics of his subject, whence it is the more remarkable that the moment the question changes from one of physics and chemistry to one of natural history, scientific opinions and the popular prejudices, which reflect them in a distorted form, undergo a sudden metamorphosis. Geologists and palaeontologists write about the 'beginning of life' and the 'first-created forms of living beings', as if they were the most familiar things in the world ; and even cautious writers seem to be on quite friendly terms with the 'archetype' whereby the Creator was guided 'amidst the crash of falling worlds'. Just as it used to be imagined that the ancient universe was physically opposed to the present, so it is still widely assumed that the living population of our globe, whether animal or vegetable, in the older epochs, exhibited forms so strikingly contrasted with those which we see around us, that there is hardly anything in common between the two. It is constantly tacitly assumed that we have before us all the forms of life which have ever existed ; and though the progress of knowledge, yearly and almost monthly, drives the defenders of that position from their ground, they entrench themselves in the new line of defences as if nothing has happened, and proclaim that the *new* beginning is the *real* beginning.

Without for an instant denying or endeavouring to



soften down the considerable positive differences (the negative ones are met by another line of argument) which undoubtedly obtain between the ancient and the modern worlds of life, we believe they have been vastly overstated and exaggerated, and this belief is based upon certain facts whose value does not seem to have been fully appreciated, though they have long been more or less completely known.

The multitudinous kinds of animals and plants, both recent and fossil, are, as is well known, arranged by zoologists and botanists, in accordance with their natural relations, into groups which receive the names of sub-kingdoms, classes, orders, families, genera and species. Now it is a most remarkable circumstance that, viewed on the great scale, living beings have differed so little throughout all geologic time that there is no sub-kingdom and no class wholly extinct or without living representatives.

If we descend to the smaller groups, we find that the number of orders of plants is about two hundred ; and I have it on the best authority that not one of these is exclusively fossil ; so that there is absolutely not a single extinct ordinal type of vegetable life ; and it is not until we descend to the next group, or the families, that we find types which are wholly extinct. The number of orders of animals, on the other hand, may be reckoned at a hundred and twenty, or thereabouts, and of these, eight or nine have no living representatives. The proportion of extinct ordinal types of animals to the existing types, therefore, does not exceed seven per cent.—a marvellously small proportion when we consider the vastness of geologic time.



Another class of considerations—of a different kind, it is true, but tending in the same direction—seems to have been overlooked. Not only is it true that the general plan of construction of animals and plants has been the same in all recorded time as at present, but there are particular kinds of animals and plants which have existed throughout vast epochs, sometimes through the whole range of recorded time, with very little change. By reason of this persistency, the typical form of such a kind might be called a ‘persistent type’, in contradistinction to those types which have appeared for but a short time in the course of the world’s history. Examples of these persistent types are abundant enough in both the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. The oldest group of plants with which we are well acquainted is that of whose remains coal is constituted ; and, so far as they can be identified, the carboniferous plants are ferns, or club-mosses, or Coniferae, in many cases generically identical with those now living !

Among animals, instances of the same kind may be found in every sub-kingdom. The *Globigerina* of the Atlantic soundings is identical with that which occurs in the chalk ; and the casts of lower silurian *Foraminifera*, which Ehrenberg has recently described, seem to indicate the existence at that remote period of forms singularly like those which now exist. Among the corals, the palaeozoic *Tabulata* are constructed on precisely the same type as the modern millepores ; and if we turn to molluscs, the most competent malacologists fail to discover any generic distinction between the *Cranidae*, *Lingulae*, and *Discinae* of the silurian rocks and those which now live. Our existing *Nautilus* has its



representative species in every great formation, from the oldest to the newest ; and *Loligo*, the squid of modern seas, appears in the lias, or at the bottom of the mesozoic series, in a form, at most, specifically different from its living congeners. In the great assemblage of annulose animals, the two highest classes, the insects and spider tribe, exhibit a wonderful persistency of type. The cockroaches of the carboniferous epoch are exceedingly similar to those which now run about our coal-cellars ; and its locusts, termites, and dragon-flies are closely allied to the members of the same groups which now chirrup about our fields, undermine our houses, or sail with swift grace about the banks of our sedgy pools. And, in like manner, the palaeozoic scorpions can only be distinguished by the eye of a naturalist from the modern ones.

Finally, with respect to the *Vertebrata*, the same law holds good : certain types, such as those of the ganoid and placoid fishes, having persisted from the palaeozoic epoch to the present time without a greater amount of deviation from the normal standard than that which is seen within the limits of the group as it now exists. Even among the *Reptilia*—the class which exhibits the largest proportion of entirely extinct forms of any—one type, that of the *Crocodylia*, has persisted from at least the commencement of the mesozoic epoch up to the present time with so much constancy, that the amount of change which it exhibits may fairly, in relation to the time which has elapsed, be called insignificant. And the imperfect knowledge we have of the ancient mammalian population of our earth leads to the belief that certain of its types, such as that of the *Marsupialia*,



have persisted with correspondingly little change through a similar range of time.

Thus it would appear to be demonstrable, that, notwithstanding the great change which is exhibited by the animal population of the world as a whole, certain types have persisted comparatively without alteration, and the question arises, What bearing have such facts as these on our notions of the history of life through geological time? The answer to this question would seem to depend on the view we take respecting the origin of species in general. If we assume that every species of animal and of plant was formed by a distinct act of creative power, and if the species which have incessantly succeeded one another were placed upon the globe by these separate acts, then the existence of persistent types is simply an unintelligible irregularity. Such assumption, however, is as unsupported by tradition or by Revelation as it is opposed by the analogy of the rest of the operations of nature : and those who imagine that, by adopting any such hypothesis, they are strengthening the hands of the advocates of the letter of the Mosaic account, are simply mistaken. If, on the other hand, we adopt that hypothesis to which alone the study of physiology lends any support—that hypothesis which, having struggled beyond the reach of those fatal supporters, the Telliameds and Vestigiarians, who so nearly caused its suffocation by wind in early infancy, is now winning at least the provisional assent of all the best thinkers of the day—the hypothesis that the forms or species of living beings, as we know them, have been produced by the gradual modification of pre-existing species—then the existence



of persistent types seems to teach us much. Just as a small portion of a great curve appears straight, the apparent absence of change in direction of the line being the exponent of the vast extent of the whole, in proportion to the part we see ; so, if it be true that all living species are the result of the modification of other and simpler forms, the existence of these little altered persistent types, ranging through all geological time, must indicate that they are but the final terms of an enormous series of modifications, which had their being in the great lapse of pregeologic time, and are now perhaps for ever lost.

In other words, when rightly studied, the teachings of palaeontology are at one with those of physical geology. Our farthest explorations carry us back but a little way above the mouth of the great river of Life : where it arose, and by what channels the noble tide has reached the point when it first breaks upon our view, is hidden from us.

The foregoing pages contain the substance of a lecture delivered before the Royal Institution of Great Britain many months ago, and of course long before the appearance of the remarkable work on the ' Origin of Species ', just published by Mr Darwin, who arrives at very similar conclusions. Although, in one sense, I might fairly say that my own views have been arrived at independently, I do not know that I can claim any equitable right to property in them ; for it has long been my privilege to enjoy Mr Darwin's friendship, and to profit by corresponding with him, and by, to some extent, becoming acquainted with the workings of his singularly original and well-stored mind. It was in



consequence of my knowledge of the general tenor of the researches in which Mr Darwin had been so long engaged ; because I had the most complete confidence in his perseverance, his knowledge, and, above all things, his high-minded love of truth ; and, moreover, because I found that the better I became acquainted with the opinions of the best naturalists regarding the vexed question of species, the less fixed they seemed to be, and the more inclined they were to the hypothesis of gradual modification, that I ventured to speak as strongly as I have done in the final paragraphs of my discourse.

Thus, my daw having so many borrowed plumes, I see no impropriety in making a tail to this brief paper by taking another handful of feathers from Mr Darwin ; endeavouring to point out in a few words, in fact, what, as I gather from the perusal of his book, his doctrines really are, and on what sort of basis they rest. And I do this the more willingly, as I observe that already the hastier sort of critics have begun, not to review my friend's book, but to howl over it in a manner which must tend greatly to distract the public mind.

No one will be better satisfied than I to see Mr Darwin's book refuted, if any person be competent to perform that feat ; but I would suggest that refutation is retarded, not aided, by mere sarcastic misrepresentation. Every one who has studied cattle-breeding, or turned pigeon-fancier, or 'pomologist', must have been struck by the extreme modifiability or plasticity of those kinds of animals and plants which have been subjected to such artificial conditions as are imposed by domestication. Breeds of dogs are more different from



one another than are the dog and the wolf ; and the purely artificial races of pigeons, if their origin were unknown, would most assuredly be reckoned by naturalists as distinct species and even genera.

These breeds are always produced in the same way. The breeder selects a pair, one or other, or both, of which present an indication of the peculiarity he wishes to perpetuate, and then selects from the offspring of them those which are most characteristic, rejecting the others. From the selected offspring he breeds again, and, taking the same precautions as before, repeats the process until he has obtained the precise degree of divergence from the primitive type at which he aimed.

If he now breeds from the variety thus established for some generations, taking care always to keep the stock pure, the tendency to produce this particular variety becomes more and more strongly hereditary ; and it does not appear that there is any limit to the persistency of the race thus developed.

Men like Lamarck, apprehending these facts, and knowing that varieties comparable to those produced by the breeder are abundantly found in nature, and finding it impossible to discriminate in some cases between varieties and true species, could hardly fail to divine the possibility that species even the most distinct were, after all, only exceedingly persistent varieties, and that they had arisen by the modification of some common stock, just as it is with good reason believed that turnspits and greyhounds, carrier and tumbler pigeons, have arisen.

But there was a link wanting to complete the parallel. Where in nature was the analogue of the breeder to be



found? How could that operation of selection, which is his essential function, be carried out by mere natural agencies? Lamarck did not value this problem; neither did he admit his impotence to solve it; but he guessed a solution. Now, guessing in science is a very hazardous proceeding, and Lamarck's reputation has suffered woefully for the absurdities into which his baseless suppositions led him.

Lamarck's conjectures, equipped with a new hat and stick, as Sir Walter Scott was wont to say of an old story renovated, formed the foundation of the biological speculations of the 'Vestiges', a work which has done more harm to the progress of sound thought on these matters than any that could be named; and, indeed, I mention it here simply for the purpose of denying that it has anything in common with what essentially characterizes Mr Darwin's work.

The peculiar feature of the latter is, in fact, that it professes to tell us what in nature takes the place of the breeder; what it is that favours the development of one variety into which a species may run, and checks that of another; and, finally, shows how this natural selection, as it is termed, may be the physical cause of the production of species by modification.

That which takes the place of the breeder and selector in nature is Death. In a most remarkable chapter, 'On the Struggle for Existence', Mr Darwin draws attention to the marvellous destruction of life which is constantly going on in nature. For every species of living thing, as for man, '*Eine Bresche ist ein jeder Tag.*'—Every species has its enemies; every species has to compete with others for the necessities of



existence ; the weakest goes to the wall, and death is the penalty inflicted on all laggards and stragglers. Every variety to which a species may give rise is either worse or better adapted to surrounding circumstances than its parent. If worse, it cannot maintain itself against death, and speedily vanishes again. But if better adapted, it must, sooner or later, 'improve' its progenitor from the face of the earth, and take its place. If circumstances change, the victor will be similarly supplanted by its own progeny ; and thus, by the operation of natural causes, unlimited modification may in the lapse of long ages occur.

For an explanation of what I have here called vaguely 'surrounding circumstances', and of why they continually change—for ample proof that the 'struggle for existence' is a very great reality, and assuredly *tends* to exert the influence ascribed to it—I must refer to Mr Darwin's book. I believe I have stated fairly the position upon which his whole theory must stand or fall ; and it is not my purpose to anticipate a full review of his work. If it can be proved that the process of natural selection, operating upon any species, can give rise to varieties of species so different from one another that none of our tests will distinguish them from true species, Mr Darwin's hypothesis of the origin of species will take its place among the established theories of science, be its consequences whatever they may. If, on the other hand, Mr Darwin has erred, either in fact or in reasoning, his fellow-workers will soon find out the weak points in his doctrines, and their extinction by some nearer approximation to the truth will exemplify his own principle of natural selection.



In either case the question is one to be settled only by the painstaking, truth-loving investigation of skilled naturalists. It is the duty of the general public to await the result in patience ; and, above all things, to discourage, as they would any other crimes, the attempt to enlist the prejudices of the ignorant, or the uncharitableness of the bigoted, on either side of the controversy.



## II

ALFRED R. WALLACE

### THE LIVING ORGANISM

**BEFORE** trying to comprehend the physical conditions on any planet which are essential for the development and maintenance of a varied and complex system of organic life comparable to that of our earth, we must obtain some knowledge of what life is, and of the fundamental nature and properties of the living organism.

Physiologists and philosophers have made many attempts to define 'life', but in most cases in aiming at absolute generality they have been vague and uninformative. Thus De Blainville defined it as 'The twofold internal movement of composition and decomposition, at once general and continuous'; while Herbert Spencer's latest definition was 'Life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations.' But neither of these is sufficiently precise, explanatory, or distinctive, and they might almost be applied to the changes occurring in a sun or planet, or to the elevation and gradual formation of a continent. One of the oldest definitions, that of Aristotle, seems to come nearer the mark: 'Life is the assemblage of the operations of nutrition, growth, and destruction.' But these definitions of 'life' are unsatisfactory, because



they apply to an abstract idea rather than to the actual living organism. The marvel and mystery of life, as we know it, resides in the body which manifests it, and this living body the definitions ignore.

The essential points in the living body, as seen in its higher developments, are, first, that it consists throughout of highly complex but very unstable forms of matter, every particle of which is in a continual state of growth or decay ; that it absorbs or appropriates dead matter from without ; takes this matter into the interior of its body ; acts upon it mechanically and chemically, rejecting what is useless or hurtful ; and so transforming the remainder as to renew every atom of its own structure internal and external, at the same time throwing off, particle by particle, all the worn-out or dead portions of its own substance.

Secondly, in order to be able to do all this, its whole body is permeated throughout by branching vessels or porous tissues, by which liquids and gases can reach every part and carry on the various processes of nutrition and excretion above referred to. As Professor Burdon Sanderson well puts it : ‘ The most distinctive peculiarity of living matter as compared with non-living is, that it is ever changing while ever the same.’ And these changes are the more remarkable because they are accompanied, and even produced, by a very large amount of mechanical work—in animals by means of their normal activities in search of food, in assimilating that food, in continually renewing and building up their whole organism, and in many other ways ; in plants by building up their structure, which often involves raising tons of material high into the air,



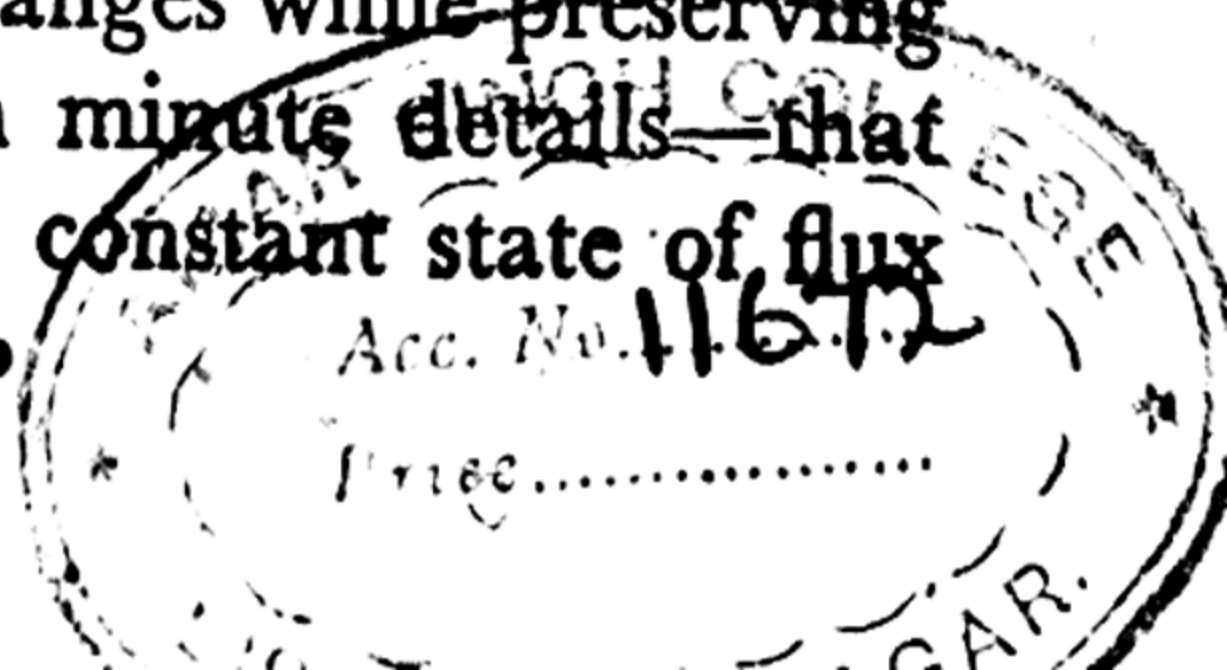
as in forest trees. As a recent writer puts it : ' The most prominent, and perhaps the most fundamental, phenomenon of life is what may be described as the *Energy Traffic* or the function of *trading in energy*. The chief physical function of living matter seems to consist in absorbing energy, storing it in a higher potential state, and afterwards partially expending it in the kinetic or active form.'<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly—and perhaps most marvellous of all—all living organisms have the power of reproduction or increase, in the lowest forms by a process of self-division or ' fission ', as it is termed, in the higher by means of reproductive cells, which, though in their earliest stage quite indistinguishable physically or chemically in very different species, yet possess the mysterious power of developing a perfect organism, identical with its parents in all its parts, shapes and organs, and so wonderfully resembling them, that the minutest distinctive details of size, form, and colour, in hair or feathers, in teeth or claws, in scales, spines, or crests, are reproduced with very close accuracy, though often involving metamorphic changes during growth of so strange a nature that, if they were not familiar to us but were narrated as occurring only in some distant and almost inaccessible region, would be treated as travellers' tales, incredible and impossible as those of Sindbad the Sailor.

In order that the substance of living bodies should be able to undergo these constant changes while preserving the same form and structure in minute details—that they should be, as it were, in a constant state of flux

<sup>1</sup> Professor F. J. Allen : *What is Life?*

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while remaining sensibly unchanged, it is necessary that the molecules of which they are built up should be so combined as to be easily separated and as easily united—be, as it is termed, *labile* or flowing; and this is brought about by their chemical composition, which, while consisting of few elements, is yet highly complex in structure, a large number of chemical atoms being combined in an endless variety of ways.

The physical basis of life, as Huxley termed it, is protoplasm, a substance which consists essentially of only four common elements, the three gases, nitrogen, hydrogen, and oxygen, with the non-metallic solid, carbon; hence all the special products of plants and animals are termed carbon-compounds and their study constitutes one of the most extensive and intricate branches of modern chemistry. Their complexity is indicated by the fact that the molecule of sugar contains 45, and that of stearine no less than 173, constituent atoms. The chemical compounds of carbon are far more numerous than those of all the other chemical elements combined; and it is this wonderful variety and the complexity of its possible combinations which explain the fact that all the various animal tissues—skin, horn, hair, nails, teeth, muscle, nerve, etc., consist of the same four elements (with occasionally minute quantities of sulphur, phosphorus, lime, or silica, in some of them), as proved by the marvellous fact that these tissues are all produced as well by the grass-eating sheep or ox as by the fish—or flesh-eating seal or tiger. And the marvel is still further increased when we consider that the innumerable diverse substances produced by plants and animals are



all formed out of the same three or four elements. Such are the endless variety of organic acids, from prussic acid to those of the various fruits ; the many kinds of sugars, gums, and starches ; the number of different kinds of oil, wax, etc. ; the variety of essential oils which are mostly forms of turpentine, with such substances as camphor, resins, caoutchouc, and gutta-percha ; and the extensive series of vegetable alkaloids, such as nicotine from tobacco, morphine from opium, strychnine, curarine, and other poisons, quinine, belladonna, and similar medicinal alkaloids, together with the essential principles of our refreshing drinks, tea, coffee, and cocoa, and others too numerous to be named here—all alike consisting solely of the four common elements from which almost our whole organism is built up. If this were not indisputably proved, it would scarcely be credited.

Professor F. J. Allen considers that the most important element in protoplasm, and that which confers upon it its most essential properties in the living organism—its extreme mobility and transposability—is nitrogen. This element, though inert in itself, readily enters into compounds when energy is supplied to it, the most striking illustration of which is the formation of ammonia, a compound of nitrogen and hydrogen, produced by electric discharges through the atmosphere. Ammonia, and certain oxides of nitrogen produced in the atmosphere in the same way, are the chief sources of the nitrogen assimilated by plants, and through them by animals ; for although plants are continually in contact with the free nitrogen of the atmosphere, they are unable to absorb it. By their



leaves they absorb oxygen and carbon-dioxide to build up their woody tissues, while by their roots they absorb water in which ammonia and oxides of nitrogen are dissolved, and from these they produce the protoplasm which builds up the whole substance of the animal world. The energy required to produce these nitrogen-compounds is given up by them when undergoing further changes and thus the production of ammonia by electricity in the atmosphere and its being carried by rain into the soil, constitute the first steps in that long series of operations which culminates in the production of the higher forms of life.

But the remarkable transformations and combinations continually going on in every living body, which are, in fact, the essential conditions of its life, are themselves dependent on certain physical conditions which must always be present. Professor Allen remarks : ' The sensitiveness of nitrogen, its proneness to change its state of combination and energy, appear to depend on certain conditions of temperature, pressure, etc., which exist at the surface of this earth. Most vital phenomena occur between the temperature of freezing water and  $104^{\circ}$  F. If the general temperature of the earth's surface rose or fell  $72^{\circ}$  F. (a small amount relatively), the whole course of life would be changed, even perchance to extinction.'

Another important, and even more essential fact, in connexion with life, is the existence in the atmosphere of a small but nearly constant proportion of carbonic acid gas, this being the source from which the whole of the carbon in the vegetable and animal kingdoms is primarily derived. The leaves of plants absorb



carbonic acid gas from the atmosphere, and the peculiar substance, chlorophyll, from which they derive their green colour, has the power, under the influence of sunlight, to decompose it, using the carbon to build up its own structure and giving out the oxygen. In the laboratory the carbon can only be separated from the oxygen by the application of heat, under which certain metals burn by combining with the oxygen, thus setting free the carbon. Chlorophyll has a highly complex chemical structure very imperfectly known, but it is said to be only produced when there is iron in the soil.

The leaves of plants, so often looked upon as mere ornamental appendages, are among the most marvellous structures in living organisms, since in decomposing carbonic acid at ordinary temperatures they do what no other agency in nature can perform. In doing this they utilize a special group of ether-waves which alone appear to have this power. The complexity of the processes going on in leaves is well indicated in the following quotation :

‘ We have seen how green leaves are supplied with gases, water, and dissolved salts, and how they can trap special ether-waves. The active energy of these waves is used to transmute the simple inorganic compounds into complex organic ones, which in the process of respiration are reduced to simpler substances again, and the potential energy transformed into kinetic. These metabolic changes take place in living cells full of intense activities. Currents course through the protoplasm and cell-sap in every direction, and between the cells which are also united by strands of protoplasm.



The gases used and given off in respiration and assimilation are floated in and out, and each protoplasm particle burned or unburned is the centre of an area of disturbance. Pure protoplasm is influenced equally by all rays : red and violet rays in particular. These, especially the red ones, bring about the dissociation of the elements of the carbonic acid, the assimilation of the carbon, and the excretion of the oxygen.<sup>1</sup>

It is this vigorous life-activity ever at work in the leaves, the roots, and the sap-cells, that builds up the plant, in all its wondrous beauty of bud and foliage, flower and fruit ; and at the same time produces, either as useful or waste-products, all that wealth of odours and flavours, of colours and textures, of fibres and varied woods, of roots and tubers, of gums and oils and resins innumerable, that, taken altogether, render the world of vegetable life perhaps more varied, more beautiful, more enjoyable, more indispensable to our higher nature than even that of animals. But there is really no comparison between them. We *could* have plants without animals ; we could not have animals without plants. And all this marvel and mystery of vegetable life, a mystery which we rarely ponder over because its effects are so familiar, is usually held to be sufficiently explained by the statement that it is all due to the special properties of protoplasm. Well might Huxley say, that protoplasm is not only a substance but a structure or mechanism, a mechanism kept at work by solar heat and light, and capable of producing a thousand times more varied and marvellous results than all the human mechanism ever invented.

<sup>1</sup> Art. 'Vegetable Physiology' in *Chambers's Encyclopaedia*.



But besides absorbing carbonic acid from the atmosphere, separating and utilizing the carbon and giving out the oxygen, plants as well as animals continually absorb oxygen from the atmosphere, and this is so universally the case that oxygen is said to be the food of protoplasm, without which it cannot continue to live ; and it is the peculiar but quite invisible structure of the protoplasm which enables it to do this, and also in plants to absorb an enormous amount of water as well.

But although protoplasm is so complex chemically as to defy exact analysis, being an elaborate structure of atoms built up into a molecule in which each atom must occupy its true place (like every carved stone in a Gothic cathedral), yet it is, as it were, only the starting-point or material out of which the infinitely varied structures of living bodies are formed. The extreme mobility and changeability of the structure of these molecules enables the protoplasm to be continually modified both in constitution and form, and, by the substitution or addition of other elements, to serve special purposes. Thus, when sulphur in small quantities is absorbed and built into the molecular structure, proteids are formed. These are most abundant in animal structures, and give the nourishing properties to meat, cheese, eggs, and other animal foods ; but they are also found in the vegetable kingdom, especially in nuts and seeds such as grain, peas, etc. They are generally known as nitrogenous foods, and are very nutritious, but not so easily digestible as meat. Proteids exist in very varied forms and often contain phosphorus as well as sulphur, but their main



characteristic is the large proportion of nitrogen they contain, while many other animal and vegetable products, as most roots, tubers, and grains, and even fats and oils, are mainly composed of starch and sugar. In its chemical and physiological aspects protein is thus described by Professor W. D. Haliburton : ' Proteids are produced only in the living laboratory of animals and plants ; proteid matter is the all-important material present in protoplasm. This molecule is the most complex that is known ; it always contains five and often six or even seven elements. The task of thoroughly understanding its composition is necessarily vast, and advance slow. But, little by little, the puzzle is being solved, and this final conquest of organic chemistry, when it does arrive, will furnish physiologists with new light on many of the dark places of physiological science.'<sup>1</sup>

What makes protoplasm and its modifications still more marvellous is the power it possesses of absorbing and moulding a number of other elements in various parts of living organisms for special uses. Such are silica in the stems of the grass family, lime and magnesia in the bones of animals, iron in blood, and many others. Besides the four elements constituting protoplasm, most animals and plants contain also in some parts of their structure sulphur, phosphorus, chlorine, silicon, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and iron ; while, less frequently, fluorine, iodine, bromine, lithium, copper, manganese, and aluminium are also found in special organs or structures ; and the molecules of all these are carried by the protoplasmic fluids to the places where

<sup>1</sup> Address to the British Association, 1902, Section Physiology.



they are required and built into the living structure, with the same precision and for similar ends as brick and stone, iron, slate, wood, and glass are each utilized in their proper places in any large building.<sup>1</sup> The organism, however, is not built, but grows. Every organ, every fibre, cell, or tissue is formed from diverse materials, which are first decomposed into their elementary molecules, transformed by the protoplasm or by special solvents formed from it, carried to the places where they are needed by the vital fluids, and there built up atom by atom or molecule by molecule into the special structures of which they are to form a part.

But even this marvel of growth and repair of every individual organism is far surpassed by the greater marvel of reproduction. Every living thing of the higher orders arises from a single microscopic cell, when fertilized, as it is termed, by the absorption of another microscopic cell derived from a different individual. These cells are often, even under the highest powers of the microscope, hardly distinguishable from other cells which occur in all animals and plants and of which their structure is built up ; yet these special cells begin to grow in a totally different manner, and instead of forming one particular part of the organism, develop inevitably into a complete living thing with all the organs, powers, and peculiarities of its parents, so as to be recognizably of the same species. If the simple growth of the fully formed organism is a mystery, what of this growth of thousands of complex organisms each

<sup>1</sup> This enumeration of the elements that enter into the structure of plants and animals is taken from Professor F. J. Allen's paper already referred to.



with all its special peculiarities, yet all arising from minute germs or cells the diverse natures of which are wholly indistinguishable by the highest powers of the microscope? This, too, is said to be the work of protoplasm under the influence of heat and moisture, and modern physiologists hope some day to learn 'how it is done'. It may be well here to give the views of a modern writer on this point. Referring to a difficulty which had been stated by Clerk-Maxwell twenty-five years ago, that there was not room in the reproductive cell for the millions of molecules needed to serve as the units of growth for all the different structures in the body of the higher animals, Professor M'Kendrick says: 'But today it is reasonable from existing data to suppose that the germinal vesicle might contain a million of millions of organic molecules. Complex arrangements of these molecules suited for the development of all the parts of a highly complicated organism, might satisfy all the demands of the theory of heredity. Doubtless the germ was a material system through and through. The conception of the physicist was, that molecules were in various states of movement; and that the thinkers were striving toward a kinetic theory of molecules and of atoms of solid matter, which might be as fruitful as the kinetic theory of gases. There were motions atomic and molecular. It was conceivable that the peculiarities of vital action might be determined by the kind of motion that took place in the molecules of what we call living matter. It might be different in kind from some of the motions dealt with by physicists. Life is continually being created from non-living material—such at least, is the existing



view of growth by the assimilation of food. The creation of living matter out of non-living may be the transmission to the dead matter of molecular motions which are *sui generis* in form.'

This is the modern physiological view of 'how it may be done', and it seems hardly more intelligible than the very old theory of the origin of stone axes, given by Adrianus Tollius in 1649, and quoted by Mr E. B. Tylor, who says: 'He gives drawings of some ordinary stone axes and hammers and tells how naturalists say that they are generated in the sky by a fulgurous exhalation conglobed in a cloud by the circumfixed humour, and are, as it were, baked hard by intense heat, and the weapon becomes pointed by the damp mixed with it flying from the dry part, and leaving the other end denser, but the exhalations press it so hard that it breaks through the cloud and makes thunder and lightning. But—he says—if this is really the way in which they are generated, it is odd they are not round, and that they have holes through them. It is hardly to be believed, he thinks.'<sup>1</sup> And so, when the physiologists, determined to avoid the assumption of anything beyond matter and motion in the germ, impute the whole development and growth of the elephant or of man from minute cells internally alike, by means of 'kinds of motion' and the 'transmission of motions which are *sui generis* in form', many of us will be inclined to say with the old author: 'It is hardly to be believed, I think.'

This brief statement of the conclusions arrived at by chemists and physiologists as to the composition and

<sup>1</sup> *Early History of Mankind*, 2nd ed., p. 227.



structure of organized living things has been thought advisable, because the non-scientific reader has often no conception of the incomparable marvel and mystery of the life-processes he has always seen going on, silently and almost unnoticed, in the world around him. And this is still more the case now that two-thirds of our population are crowded into cities where, removed from all the occupations, the charms, and the interests of country life, they are driven to seek occupation and excitement in the theatre, the music-hall, or the tavern. How little do these know what they lose by being thus shut out from all quiet intercourse with nature ; its soothing sights and sounds ; its exquisite beauties of form and colour ; its endless mysteries of birth, and life, and death. Most people give scientific men credit for much greater knowledge than they possess in these matters ; and many educated readers will, I feel sure, be surprised to find that even such apparently simple phenomena as the rise of the sap in trees are not yet completely explained: As to the deeper problems of life, and growth, and reproduction, though our physiologists have learned an infinite amount of curious or instructive facts, they can give us no intelligible explanation of them.

The endless complexities and confusing amount of detail in all treatises on the physiology of animals and plants are such, that the average reader is overwhelmed with the mass of knowledge presented to him, and concludes that after such elaborate researches everything must be known, and that the almost universal protests against the need of any causes but the mechanical, physical, and chemical laws and forces



are well founded. I have, therefore, thought it advisable to present a kind of bird's-eye view of the subject, and to show, in the words of the greatest living authorities on these matters, both how complex are the phenomena and how far our teachers are from being able to give us any adequate explanation of them.

I venture to hope that the very brief sketch on the subject I have been able to give will enable my readers to form some faint general conception of the infinite complexity of life and the various problems connected with it ; and that they will thus be the better enabled to appreciate the extreme delicacy of those adjustments, those forces, and those complex conditions of the environment, that alone render life, and above all the grand age-long panorama of the development of life, in any way possible. It is to these conditions, as they prevail in the world around us, that we will now direct our attention.



### III

JOHN RUSKIN

## OF KINGS' TREASURIES

' You shall have a cake of sesame,—and ten pound.'

LUCIAN : *The Fisherman*

I. My first duty this evening is to ask your pardon for the ambiguity of title under which the subject of lecture has been announced : for indeed I am not going to talk of kings, known as regnant, nor of treasuries, understood to contain wealth ; but of quite another order of royalty, and another material of riches, than those usually acknowledged. I had even intended to ask your attention for a little while on trust, and (as sometimes one contrives, in taking a friend to see a favourite piece of scenery) to hide what I wanted most to show, with such imperfect cunning as I might, until we unexpectedly reached the best point of view by winding paths. But—and as also I have heard it said, by men practised in public address, that hearers are never so much fatigued as by the endeavour to follow a speaker who gives them no clue to his purpose—I will take the slight mask off at once, and tell you plainly that I want to speak to you about the treasures hidden in books ; and about the way we find them, and the way we lose them. A grave subject, you will say ; and a wide one ! Yes ; so wide that I shall make no effort to touch the compass of it. I will try only to



bring before you a few simple thoughts about reading, which press themselves upon me every day more deeply, as I watch the course of the public mind with respect to our daily enlarging means of education ; and the answeringly wider spreading on the levels, of the irrigation of literature.

2. It happens that I have practically some connexion with schools for different classes of youth ; and I receive many letters from parents respecting the education of their children. In the mass of these letters I am always struck by the precedence which the idea of a ' position in life ' takes above all other thoughts in the parents'—more especially in the mothers'—minds. ' The education befitting such and such a *station in life* '—this is the phrase, this the object, always. They never seek, as far as I can make out, an education good in itself ; even the conception of abstract rightness in training rarely seems reached by the writers. But, an education ' which shall keep a good coat on my son's back ;—which shall enable him to ring with confidence the visitors' bell at double-belled doors ; which shall result ultimately in the establishment of a double-belled door to his own house ;—in a word, which shall lead to advancement in life ;—*this* we pray for on bent knees—and this is *all* we pray for '. It never seems to occur to the parents that there may be an education which, in itself, is advancement in Life ;—that any other than that may perhaps be advancement in Death ; and that this essential education might be more easily got, or given, than they fancy, if they set about it in the right way ; while it is for no price, and by no favour, to be got, if they set about it in the wrong.



3. Indeed, among the ideas most prevalent and effective in the mind of this busiest of countries, I suppose the first—at least that which is confessed with the greatest frankness, and put forward as the fittest stimulus to youthful exertion—is this of ‘Advancement in life’. May I ask you to consider with me, what this idea practically includes, and what it should include?

Practically, then, at present, ‘advancement in life’ means, becoming conspicuous in life; obtaining a position which shall be acknowledged by others to be respectable or honourable. We do not understand by this advancement, in general, the mere making of money, but the being known to have made it; not the accomplishment of any great aim, but the being seen to have accomplished it. In a word, we mean the gratification of our thirst for applause. That thirst, if the last infirmity of noble minds, is also the first infirmity of weak ones; and, on the whole, the strongest impulsive influence of average humanity: the greatest efforts of the race have always been traceable to the love of praise, as its greatest catastrophes to the love of pleasure.

4. I am not about to attack or defend this impulse. I want you only to feel how it lies at the root of effort; especially of all modern effort. It is the gratification of vanity which is, with us, the stimulus of toil and balm of repose; so closely does it touch the very springs of life that the wounding of our vanity is always spoken of (and truly) as in its measure *mortal*; we call it ‘mortification’, using the same expression which we should apply to a gangrenous and incurable bodily hurt. And although a few of us may be physicians enough to



recognize the various effect of this passion upon health and energy, I believe most honest men know, and would at once acknowledge, its leading power with them as a motive. The seaman does not commonly desire to be made captain only because he knows he can manage the ship better than any other sailor on board. He wants to be made captain that he may be *called* captain. The clergyman does not usually want to be made a bishop only because he believes that no other hand can, as firmly as his, direct the diocese through its difficulties. He wants to be made bishop primarily that he may be called 'My Lord'. And a prince does not usually desire to enlarge, or a subject to gain, a kingdom, because he believes that no one else can as well serve the State, upon its throne; but briefly, because he wishes to be addressed as 'Your Majesty', by as many lips as may be brought to such utterance.

5. This, then, being the main idea of 'advancement in life', the force of it applies, for all of us, according to our station, particularly to that secondary result of such advancement which we call 'getting into good society'. We want to get into good society not that we may have it, but that we may be seen in it; and our notion of its goodness depends primarily on its conspicuousness.

Will you pardon me if I pause for a moment to put what I fear you may think an impertinent question? I never can go on with an address unless I feel, or know, that my audience are either with me or against me: I do not much care which, in beginning; but I must know where they are; and I would fain find out, at this instant, whether you think I am putting the motives



of popular action too low. I am resolved, tonight, to state them low enough to be admitted as probable ; for whenever, in my writings on Political Economy, I assume that a little honesty, or generosity—or what used to be called ‘ virtue ’—may be calculated upon as a human motive of action, people always answer me, saying, ‘ You must not calculate on that : that is not in human nature : you must not assume anything to be common to men but acquisitiveness and jealousy ; no other feeling ever has influence on them, except accidentally, and in matters out of the way of business.’ I begin, accordingly, tonight low in the scale of motives ; but I must know if you think me right in doing so. Therefore, let me ask those who admit the love of praise to be usually the strongest motive in men’s minds in seeking advancement, and the honest desire of doing any kind of duty to be an entirely secondary one, to hold up their hands. (*About a dozen hands held up—the audience, partly, not being sure the lecturer is serious, and, partly, shy of expressing opinion.*) I am quite serious—I really want to know what you think ; however, I can judge by putting the reverse question. Will those who think that duty is generally the first, and love of praise the second, motive, hold up their hands ? (*One hand reported to have been held up, behind the lecturer.*) Very good : I see you are with me, and that you think I have not begun too near the ground. Now without teasing you by putting farther question, I venture to assume that you will admit duty as at least a secondary or tertiary motive. You think that the desire of doing something useful, or obtaining some real good, is indeed an existent collateral idea, though a secondary one, in



most men's desire of advancement. You will grant that moderately honest men desire place and office, at least in some measure, for the sake of beneficent power ; and would wish to associate rather with sensible and well-informed persons than with fools and ignorant persons, whether they are seen in the company of the sensible ones or not. And finally, without being troubled by repetition of any common truisms about the preciousness of friends, and the influence of companions you will admit, doubtless, that according to the sincerity of our desire that our friends may be true, and our companions wise—and in proportion to the earnestness and discretion with which we choose both, will be the general chances of our happiness and usefulness.

6. But granting that we had both the will and the sense to choose our friends well, how few of us have the power ! or, at least, how limited, for most, is the sphere of choice ! Nearly all our associations are determined by chance, or necessity ; and restricted within a narrow circle. We cannot know whom we would ; and those whom we know, we cannot have at our side when we most need them. All the higher circles of human intelligence are, to those beneath, only momentarily and partially open. We may, by good fortune, obtain a glimpse of a great poet, and hear the sound of his voice ; or put a question to a man of science, and be answered good-humouredly. We may intrude ten minutes' talk on a cabinet minister, answered probably with words worse than silence, being deceptive ; or snatch, once or twice in our lives, the privilege of throwing a bouquet in the path of a Princess, or arresting the kind glance



of a Queen. And yet these momentary chances we covet ; and spend our years, and passions, and powers in pursuit of little more than these ; while, meantime, there is a society continually open to us, of people who will talk to us as long as we like, whatever our rank or occupation ;—talk to us in the best words they can choose, and of the things nearest their hearts. And this society, because it is so numerous and so gentle, and can be kept waiting round us all day long—kings and statesmen lingering patiently, not to grant audience, but to gain it !—in those plainly furnished and narrow ante-rooms, our bookcase shelves—we make no account of that company—perhaps never listen to a word they would say, all day long !

7. You may tell me, perhaps, or think within yourselves, that the apathy with which we regard this company of the noble, who are praying us to listen to them ; and the passion with which we pursue the company, probably of the ignoble, who despise us, or who have nothing to teach us, are grounded in this—that we can see the faces of the living men, and it is themselves, and not their sayings, with which we desire to become familiar. But it is not so. Suppose you never were to see their faces—suppose you could be put behind a screen in the statesman's cabinet, or the prince's chamber, would you not be glad to listen to their words, though you were forbidden to advance beyond the screen ? And when the screen is only a little less, folded in two instead of four, and you can be hidden behind the cover of the two boards that bind a book, and listen all day long, not to the casual talk, but to the studied, determined, chosen addresses of the



wisest of men—this station of audience, and honourable privy council, you despise !

8. But perhaps you will say that it is because the living people talk of things that are passing, and are of immediate interest to you, that you desire to hear them. Nay ; that cannot be so, for the living people will themselves tell you about passing matters, much better in their writings than in their careless talk. But I admit that this motive does influence you, so far as you prefer those rapid and ephemeral writings to slow and enduring writings—books, properly so called. For all books are divisible into two classes : the books of the hour, and the books of all time. Mark this distinction—it is not one of quality only. It is not merely the bad book that does not last, and the good one that does. It is a distinction of species. There are good books for the hour, and good ones for all time : bad books for the hour, and bad ones for all time. I must define the two kinds before I go farther.

9. The good book of the hour, then—I do not speak of the bad ones—is simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed for you. Very useful often, telling you what you need to know ; very pleasant often, as a sensible friend's present talk would be. These bright accounts of travels ; good-humoured and witty discussions of question ; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel ; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history ;—all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar possession of the present age : we ought to be entirely



thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them. But we make the worst possible use if we allow them to usurp the place of true books : for, strictly speaking, they are not books at all, but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful, or necessary, today : whether worth keeping or not, is to be considered. The newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast-time, but assuredly it is not reading for all day. So, though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word a 'book' at all, nor in the real sense, to be 'read'. A book is essentially not a talked thing, but a written thing ; and written, not with a view of mere communication, but of permanence. The book of talk is printed only because its author cannot speak to thousands of people at once ; if he could, he would—the volume is mere *multiplication* of his voice. You cannot talk to your friend in India ; if you could, you would ; you write instead : that is mere *conveyance* of voice. But a book is written, not to multiply the voice merely, not to carry it merely, but to perpetuate it. The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful, or helpfully beautiful. So far as he knows, no one has yet said it ; so far as he knows, no one else can say it. He is bound to say it, clearly and melodiously if he may ; clearly, at all events. In the sum of his life he finds this to be



the thing, or group of things, manifest to him ;—this, the piece of true knowledge, or sight, which his share of sunshine and earth has permitted him to seize. He would fain set it down for ever ; engrave it on rock, if he could ; saying, ‘ This is the best of me ; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another ; my life was as the vapour, and is not ; but this I saw and knew : this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory.’ That is his ‘ writing ’ ; it is, in his small human way, and with whatever degree of true inspiration is in him, his inscription, or scripture. That is a ‘ Book ’.

10. Perhaps you think no books were ever so written ?

But, again, I ask you, do you at all believe in honesty, or at all in kindness ? or do you think there is never any honesty or benevolence in wise people ? None of us, I hope, are so unhappy as to think that. Well, whatever bit of a wise man’s work is honestly and benevolently done, that bit is his book, or his piece of art.<sup>1</sup> It is mixed always with evil fragments—ill-done, redundant, affected work. But if you read rightly, you will easily discover the true bits, and those *are* the book.

11. Now, books of this kind have been written in all ages by their greatest men—by great readers, great statesmen, and great thinkers. These are all at your choice ; and Life is short. You have heard as much before—yet, have you measured and mapped out this short life and its possibilities ? Do you know, if you read this, that you cannot read that—that what you

<sup>1</sup> Note this sentence carefully, and compare the ‘ Queen of the Air ’, § 106. [1871.]



lose today you cannot gain tomorrow? Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable-boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourselves that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect, that you jostle with the hungry and common crowd for *entrée* here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society, wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen, and the mighty, of every place and time? Into that you may enter always; in that you may take fellowship and rank according to your wish; from that, once entered into it, you can never be an outcast but by your own fault; by your aristocracy of companionship there, your own inherent aristocracy will be assuredly tested, and the motives with which you strive to take high place in the society of the living, measured, as to all the truth and sincerity that are in them, by the place you desire to take in this company of the Dead.

12. 'The place you desire', and the place *you fit yourself for*, I must also say; because, observe, this court of the past differs from all living aristocracy in this:—it is open to labour and to merit, but to nothing else. No wealth will bribe, no name overawe, no artifice deceive, the guardian of those Elysian gates. In the deep sense, no bile or vulgar person ever enters there. At the portières of that silent Faubourg St. Germain, there is but brief question: 'Do you deserve to enter? Pass. Do you ask to be the companion of nobles? Make yourself noble, and you shall be. Do you long for the conversation of the wise? Learn to understand it, and you shall hear it. But on other terms?—no.



If you will not rise to us, we cannot stoop to you. The living lord may assume courtesy, the living philosopher explain his thought to you with considerate pain ; but here we neither feign nor interpret ; you must rise to the level of our thoughts if you would be gladdened by them, and share our feelings if you would recognize our presence.'

13. This, then, is what you have to do, and I admit that it is much. You must, in a word, love these people, if you are to be among them. No ambition is of any use. They scorn your ambition. You must love them, and show your love in these two following ways.

1.—First, by a true desire to be taught by them, and to enter into their thoughts. To enter into theirs, observe ; not to find your own expressed by them. If the person who wrote the book is not wiser than you, you need not read it ; if he be, he will think differently from you in many respects.

Very ready we are to say of a book, 'How good this is—that's exactly what I think !' But the right feeling is, 'How strange that is ! I never thought of that before, and yet I see it is true ; or if I do not now, I hope I shall, some day.' But whether thus submissively or not, at least be sure that you go to the author to get at *his* meaning, not to find yours. Judge it afterwards if you think yourself qualified to do so ; but ascertain it first. And be sure also, if the author is worth anything, that you will not get at his meaning all at once—nay, that at his whole meaning you will not for a long time arrive in any wise. Not that he does not say what he means, and in strong words too ; but



he cannot say it all ; and what is more strange, *will* not, but in a hidden way and in parable, in order that he may be sure you want it. I cannot quite see the reason of this, nor analyse that cruel reticence in the breasts of wise men which makes them always hide their deeper thought. They do not give it you by way of help, but of reward ; and will make themselves sure that you deserve it before they allow you to reach it. But it is the same with the physical type of wisdom, gold. There seems, to you and me, no reason why the electric forces of the earth should not carry whatever there is of gold within it at once to the mountain tops, so that kings and people might know that all the gold they could get was there ; and without any trouble of digging, or anxiety, or chance, or waste of time, cut it away, and coin as much as they needed. But Nature does not manage it so. She puts it in little fissures in the earth, nobody knows where ; you may dig long and find none ; you must dig painfully to find any.

14. And it is just the same with men's best wisdom. When you come to a good book, you must ask yourself, ' Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would ? Are my pickaxes and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up to the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper ? ' And, keeping the figure a little longer, even at cost of tiresomeness, for it is a thoroughly useful one, the metal you are in search of being the author's mind or meaning, his words are as the rock which you have to crush and smelt in order to get at it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning ; your smelting furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get at any good



author's meaning without those tools and that fire ; often you will need sharpest, finest chiselling, and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal.

15. And, therefore, first of all, I tell you earnestly and authoritatively (I *know* I am right in this), you must get into the habit of looking intensely at words and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable—nay, letter by letter. For though it is only by reason of the opposition of letters in the function of signs, to sounds in the function of signs, that the study of books is called ' literature ', and that a man versed in it is called, by the consent of nations, a man of letters instead of a man of books, or of words, you may yet connect with that accidental nomenclature this real fact—that you might read all the books in the British Museum (if you could live long enough), and remain an utterly ' illiterate ', uneducated person ; but that if you read ten pages of a good book, letter by letter—that is to say, with real accuracy—you are for evermore in some measure an educated person. The entire difference between education and non-education (as regards the merely intellectual part of it), consists in this accuracy. A well-educated gentleman may not know many languages—may not be able to speak any but his own—may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows, he knows precisely ; whatever word he pronounces, he pronounces rightly ; above all, he is learned in the *peerage* of words ; knows the words of true descent and ancient blood, at a glance, from words of modern canaille ; remembers all their ancestry, their intermarriages, distant relationships,



and the extent to which they were admitted, and offices they held, among the national noblesse of words at any time, and in any country. But an uneducated person may know, by memory, many languages, and talk them all, and yet truly know not a word of any—not a word of even his own. An ordinarily clever and sensible seaman will be able to make his way ashore at most ports ; yet he has only to speak a sentence of any language to be known for an illiterate person ; so also the accent, or turn of expression of a single sentence, will at once mark a scholar. And this is so strongly felt, so conclusively admitted, by educated persons, that a false accent or a mistaken syllable is enough, in the parliament of any civilized nation, to assign to a man a certain degree of inferior standing for ever.



IV  
CARDINAL NEWMAN  
PARALLEL CHARACTERISTICS OF  
ENGLISHMEN

I HOPE I have now made it clear, that, in saying that a free State will not be strong, I am far indeed from saying that a People with what is called a free Constitution will not be active, powerful, influential, and successful. I am only saying that it will do its great deeds, not through the medium of its government, or *politically*, but through the medium of its individual members, or *nationally*. Self-government, which is another name for political weakness, may really be the means or the token of national greatness. Athens, as a State, was wanting in the elements of integrity, firmness, and consistency ; but perhaps that political deficiency was the very condition and a result of her intellectual activity.

I will allow more than this readily. Not only in cases such as that of Athens, is the State's loss the Nation's gain, but further, most of those very functions which in despotisms are undertaken by the State may be performed in free countries by the Nation. For instance, roads, the posts, railways, bridges, aqueducts, and the like, in absolute monarchies, are governmental matters ; but they may be left to private energy, where self-government prevails. Letter-carriage indeed involves an extent of system and a punctuality in work, which is too much for any combination of individuals ;



but the care of Religion, which is a governmental work in Russia, and partly so in England, is left to private competition in the United States. Education, in like manner, is sometimes provided by the State, sometimes left to religious denominations, sometimes to private zeal and charity. The Fine Arts sometimes depend on the patronage of Court or Government ; sometimes are given in charge to Academies ; sometimes to committees or vestries.

I do not say that a Nation will manage all these departments equally well, or so well as a despotic government ; and some departments it will not be able to manage at all. Did I think it could manage all, I should have nothing to write about. I am distinctly maintaining that the war department it cannot manage ; that is my very point. It cannot conduct a war ; but not from any fault in the nation, or with any resulting disparagement to popular governments and Constitutional States, but merely because we cannot have all things at once in this world, however big we are, and because, in the nature of things, one thing cannot be another. I do not say that a Constitutional State never must risk war, never must engage in war, never will conquer in war ; but that its strong point lies in the other direction. If we would see what liberty, independence, self-government, a popular Constitution, can do, we must look to times of tranquillity. In peace a self-governing nation is prosperous in itself, and influential in the wide world. Its special works, the sciences, the useful arts, literature, the interests of knowledge generally, material comfort, the means and appliances of a happy life, thrive



especially in peace. And thus such a nation spreads abroad, and subdues the world, and reigns in the admiration and gratitude and deference of men, by the use of weapons which war shivers to pieces. Alas ! that mortals do not know themselves, and will not (according to the proverb) cut their coat according to their cloth ! ‘ *Optat ephippia bos.*’ John Bull, like other free, self-governing nations, would undertake a little war just now, as if it were his *forte*—as great lawyers have cared for nothing but a reputation for dancing gracefully, and literary men have bought a complex coat-of-arms at the Heralds’ College. Why will we not be content to be human ? why not content with the well-grounded consciousness that no polity in the world is so wonderful, so good to its subjects, so favourable to individual energy, so pleasant to live under, as our own ? I do not say, why will we go to war ? but, why will we not think *twice* first ? why do we not ascertain our actual position, our strength, our weakness, before we do so ?

For centuries upon centuries England has been, like Attica, a secluded land ; so remote from the highway of the world, so protected from the flood of Eastern and Northern barbarism, that her children have grown into a magnanimous contempt of external danger. They have had ‘ a cheap defence ’ in the stormy sea which surrounds them ; and, from time immemorial, they have had such skill in weathering it, that their wooden walls, to use the Athenian term, became a second rampart against the foe, whom wind and water did not overwhelm. So secure have they felt in those defences, that they have habitually neglected others ; so that, in spite of their valour, when a foe once gained



the shore, be he Dane, or Norman, or Dutch, he was encountered by no sustained action or organized resistance, and became their king. These, however, were rare occurrences, and made no lasting impression; they were not sufficient to divert them from pursuing, or to thwart them in attaining, the amplest measures of liberty. Whom had the people to fear? not even their ships, which could not, like military, become a paid force encircling a tyrant, and securing him against their resistance.

To these outward circumstances of England, determining the direction of its political growth, must be added the character of the people themselves. There are races to whom consanguinity itself is not concord and unanimity, but the reverse. They fight with each other, for lack of better company. Imaginative, fierce, vindictive, with their clans, their pedigrees, and their feuds, snorting war, spurning trade or tillage, the old Highlanders, if placed on the broad plains of England, would have in time run through their national existence, and died the death of the sons of Oedipus. But, if you wish to see the sketch of a veritable Englishman in strong relief, refresh your recollection of Walter Scott's 'Two Drovers'. He is indeed rough, surly, a bully and a bigot; these are his weak points: but if ever there was a generous, good, tender heart, it beats within his breast. Most placable, he forgives and forgets: forgets, not only the wrongs he has received, but the insults he has inflicted. Such he is commonly; for doubtless there are times and circumstances in his dealings with foreigners in which, whether when in despair, or from pride, he becomes truculent and simply hateful; but at home his bark is worse than his



bite. He has qualities, excellent for the purposes of neighbourhood and intercourse—and he has, besides, a shrewd sense, and a sobriety of judgement, and a practical logic, which passion does not cloud, and which makes him understand that good-fellowship is not only commendable, but expedient too. And he has within him a spring of energy, pertinacity, and perseverance, which makes him as busy and effective in a colony as he is companionable at home. Some races do not move at all ; others are ever jostling against each other ; the Englishman is ever stirring, yet never treads too hard upon his fellow-countryman's toes. He does his work neatly, silently, in his own place ; he looks to himself, and can take care of himself ; and he has that instinctive veneration for the law, that he can worship it even in the abstract, and thus is fitted to go shares with others all around him in that political sovereignty, which other races are obliged to concentrate in one ruler.

There was a time when England was divided into seven principalities, formed out of the wild warriors whom the elder race had called in to their own extermination. What would have been the history of these kingdoms if the invaders had been Highlanders instead of Saxons ? But the Saxon Heptarchy went on, without any very desperate wars of kingdom with kingdom, pretty much as the nation goes on now. Indeed, I much question, supposing Englishmen rose one morning and found themselves in a Heptarchy again, whether its seven portions would not jog on together, much as they do now under Queen Victoria, the union in both cases depending, not so much on the



government and the governed, but on the people, viewed in themselves, to whom peaceableness, justice, and non-interference are natural.

It is an invaluable national quality to be keen, yet to be fair to others ; to be inquisitive, acquisitive, enterprising, aspiring, progressive, without encroaching upon his next neighbour's right to be the same. Such a people hardly need a Ruler, as being mainly free from the infirmities which make a ruler necessary. Law, like medicine, is only called for to assist nature ; and, when nature does so much for a people, the wisest policy is, as far as possible, to leave them to themselves. This, then, is the science of government with English Statesmen, to leave the people alone ; a free action, a clear stage, and they will do the rest for themselves. The more a Ruler meddles, the less he succeeds ; the less he initiates, the more he accomplishes ; his duty is that of overseeing, facilitating, encouraging, guiding, interposing on emergencies. Some races are like children, and require a despot to nurse, and feed, and dress them, to give them pocket money, and take them out for airings. Others, more manly, prefer to be rid of the trouble of their affairs, and use their Ruler as their mere manager and man of business. Now an Englishman likes to take his own matters into his own hands. He stands on his own ground, and does as much work as half a dozen men of certain other races. He can join too with others, and has a turn for organizing, but he insists on its being voluntary. He is jealous of no one, except kings and governments, and offensive to no one except their partisans and creatures.

This, then, is the people for private enterprise ; and



of private enterprise alone have I been speaking all along. What a place is London in its extent, its complexity, its myriads of dwellings, its subterraneous works ! It is the production, for the most part, of individual enterprise. Waterloo Bridge was the greatest architectural achievement of the generation before this ; it was built by shares. New regions, with streets of palaces and shops innumerable, each shop a sort of shrine or temple of this or that trade, and each a treasure-house of its own merchandise, grow silently into existence, the creation of private spirit and speculation. The gigantic system of railroads rises and asks for its legal *status* : prudent statesmen decide that it must be left to private companies, to the exclusion of Government. Trade is to be encouraged : the best encouragement is, that it should be free. A famine threatens ; one thing must be avoided—any meddling on the part of Government with the export and import of provisions.

Emigration is in vogue : out go swarms of colonists, not, as in ancient times, from the Prytaneum, under State guidance and with religious rites, but each by himself, and at his own arbitrary and sudden will. The ship is wrecked ; the passengers are cast upon a rock—or make the hazard of a raft. In the extremest peril, in the most delicate and most anxious of operations, every one seems to find his place, as if by magic, and does his work, and subserves the rest with coolness, cheerfulness, gentleness, and without a master. Or they have a fair passage, and gain their new country ; each takes his allotted place there, and works in it in his own way. Each acts irrespectively of the rest, takes



care of number one, with a kind word and deed for his neighbour, but still as fully understanding that he must depend for his own welfare on himself. Pass a few years, and a town has risen on the desert beach, and houses of business are extending their connexions and influence up the country. At length, a company of merchants make the place their homestead, and they protect themselves from their enemies with a fort. They need a better defence than they have provided, for a numerous host is advancing upon them, and they are likely to be driven into the sea. Suddenly, a youth, the castaway of his family, half-clerk, half-soldier, puts himself at the head of a few troops, defends posts, gains battles, and ends in founding a mighty empire over the graves of Mahmood and Aurungzebe.

It is the deed of one man ; and so, wherever we go, all over the earth, it is the solitary Briton, the London agent, or the *Milordos*, who is walking restlessly about, abusing the natives, and raising a colossus, or setting the Thames on fire, in the East or the West. He is on the top of the Andes, or in a diving-bell in the Pacific, or taking notes at Timbuctoo, or grubbing at the Pyramids, or scouring over the Pampas, or acting as prime minister to the king of Dahomey, or smoking the pipe of friendship with the Red Indians, or hutting at the Pole. No one can say beforehand what will come of these various specimens of the independent, self-governing, self-reliant Englishmen. Sometimes failure, sometimes openings for trade, scientific discoveries, or political aggrandizements. His country and his government have the gain ; but it is he who is the instrument of it, and not political organization,



centralization, systematic plans, authoritative acts. The polity of England is what it was before—the Government weak, the Nation strong—strong in the strength of its multitudinous enterprise, which gives to its Government a position in the world, which that Government could not claim for itself by any prowess or device of its own.

### REVERSE OF THE PICTURE

The social union promises two great and contrary advantages, Protection and Liberty—such protection as shall not interfere with liberty, and such liberty as shall not interfere with protection. How much a given nation can secure of the one, and how much of the other, depends on its peculiar circumstances. As there are small frontier territories, which find it their interest to throw themselves into the hands of some great neighbour, sacrificing their liberties as the price of purchasing safety from barbarians or rivals, so too there are countries which, in the absence of external danger have abandoned themselves to the secure indulgence of freedom, to the jealous exercise of self-government, and to the scientific formation of a Constitution. And as, when liberty has to be surrendered for protection, the Horse must not be surprised if the Man whips or spurs him, so, when protection is neglected for the sake of liberty, he must not be surprised if he suffers from the horns of the Stag.

Protected by the sea, and gifted with a rare energy, self-possession, and imperturbability, the English people have been able to carry out self-government to its



limits, and to absorb into its constitutional action many of those functions which are necessary for the protection of any country, and commonly belong to the Executive ; and triumphing in their marvellous success they have thought no task too hard for them, and have from time to time attempted more than even England could accomplish. Such a crisis has come upon us now, and the Constitution has not been equal to the occasion. For a year past we have been conducting a great war on our Constitutional *routine*, and have not succeeded in it. If we continue that *routine*, we shall have more failures, with France or Russia (whichever you please) to profit by it :—if we change it, we change what after all is Constitutional. It is this dilemma which makes me wish for peace—or else some *Deus è machinâ*, some one greater even than Wellington, to carry us through. We cannot depend upon Constitutional *routine*.

People abuse *routine*, and say that all the mischief which happens is the fault of *routine*—but can they get out of *routine*, without getting out of the Constitution ? That is the question. The fault of a *routine* Executive, I suppose, is not that the Executive always goes on in one way—else, system is in fault—but that it goes on in a bad way, or on a bad system. We must either change the system, then—our Constitutional system ; or not find fault with its *routine*, which is according to it. The present Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry, for instance, is either a function and instrument of the *routine* system—and therefore is making bad worse—or is not—and then perhaps it is only the beginning of an infringement of the Constitution. There may be Constitutional failures which have no Constitutional



remedies, unwilling as we may be to allow it. They may be necessarily incidental to a free self-governing people.

The Executive of a nation is the same all over the world, being, in other words, the administration of the nation's affairs ; it differs in different countries, not in its nature and office, nor in its ends, acts, or functions, but in its characteristics, as being prompt, direct, effective, or the contrary ; that is, as being strong or feeble. If it pursues its ends earnestly, performs its acts vigorously, and discharges its functions successfully, then it is a strong Executive ; if otherwise, it is feeble. Now, it is obvious, the more it is concentrated, that is, the fewer are its springs, and the simpler its mechanism, the stronger it is, because it has least friction and loss of power ; on the other hand, the more numerous and widely dispersed its centres of action are, and the more complex and circuitous their inter-action, the more feeble it is. It is strongest, then, when it is lodged in one man out of the whole nation ; it is feeblest, when it is lodged, by participation or conjointly, in every man in it. How can we help what is self-evident ? If the English people lodge power in the many, not in the few, what wonder that its operation is roundabout, clumsy, slow, intermittent, and disappointing ? And what is the good of finding fault with the *routine*, if it is after all the principle of the *routine*, or the system, or the Constitution, which causes the hitch ? You cannot eat your cake and have it ; you cannot be at once a self-governing nation and have a strong government. Recollect Wellington's question in opposition to the Reform Bill, 'How is the King's Government to be carried on ?' We are beginning to experience its full meaning.



A people so alive, so curious, so busy as the English, will be a power in themselves, independently of political arrangements ; and will be on that very ground jealous of a rival, impatient of a master, and strong enough to cope with the one and to withstand the other. A government is their natural foe ; they cannot do without it altogether, but they will have of it as little as they can. They will forbid the concentration of power ; they will multiply its seats, complicate its acts, and make it safe by making it inefficient. They will take care that it is the worst-worked of all the many organizations which are found in their country. As despotisms keep their subjects in ignorance, lest they should rebel, so will a free people maim and cripple their government, lest it should tyrannize.

This is human nature ; the more powerful a man is, the more jealous is he of other powers. Little men endure little men ; but great men aim at a solitary grandeur. The English nation is intensely conscious of itself ; it has seen, inspected, recognized, appreciated, and warranted itself. It has erected itself into a personality, under the style and title of John Bull. Most neighbourly is he when left alone ; but irritable, when commanded or coerced. He wishes to form his own judgement in all matters, and to have everything proved to him ; he dislikes the thought of generously placing his interests in the hands of others, he grudges to give up what he cannot really keep himself, and stickles for being at least a sleeping partner in transactions which are beyond him. He pays his people for their work, and is as proud of them, if they do it well, as a rich man of his tall footmen.



Policy might teach him a different course. If you want your work done well, which you cannot do yourself, find the best man, put it into his hand, and trust him implicitly. An Englishman is too sensible not to understand this in private matters ; but in matters of State he is afraid of such a policy. He prefers the system of checks and counter-checks, the division of power, the imperative concurrence of disconnected officials, and his own supervision and revision—the method of hitches, cross-purposes, collisions, dead-locks, to the experiment of treating his public servants as gentlemen. I am not quarrelling with what is inevitable in his system of self-government ; I only say that he cannot expect his work done in the best style, if this is his mode of providing for it. Duplicate functionaries do but merge responsibility ; and a jealous master is paid with formal, heartless service. Do your footmen love you across the gulf which you have fixed between them and you ? and can you expect your store-keepers and harbour-masters at Balaklava not to serve you by rule and precedent, not to be rigid in their interpretation of your orders, and to commit themselves as little as they can, when you show no belief in their zeal, and have no mercy on their failures ?

England, surely, is the paradise of little men, and the purgatory of great ones. May I never be a Minister of State or a Field-Marshal ! I'd be an individual, self-respecting Briton, in my own private castle, with *The Times* to see the world by, and pen and paper to scribble off withal to some public print, and set the world right. Public men are only my *employés* ; I use them as I think fit, and turn them off without warning.



Aberdeen, Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, Newcastle, what are they muttering about services and ingratitude? were they not paid? hadn't they their regular quarter-day? Raglan, Burgoyne, Dundas—I cannot recollect all the fellows' names—can they merit aught? can they be profitable to me their lord and master? And so, having no tenderness or respect for their persons, their antecendents, or their age—not caring that in fact they are serving me with all their strength, not asking whether, if they manage ill, it be not, perchance, because they are in the fetters of Constitutional red tape, which have weighed on their hearts and deadened their energies, till the hazard of failure and the fear of censure have quenched the spirit of daring, I think it becoming and generous—during, not after their work, not when it is ended, but in the very agony of conflict—to institute a formal process of inquiry into their demerits, not secret, not indulgent to their sense of honour, but in the hearing of all Europe, and amid the scorn of the world—hitting down, knocking over, my workhouse apprentices, in order that they may get up again, and do my matters for me better.

How far these ways of managing a crisis can be amended in a self-governing Nation, it is most difficult to say. They are doubly deplorable, as being both unjust and impolitic. They are kind, neither to ourselves, nor to our public servants; and they so unpleasantly remind one of certain passages of Athenian history, as to suggest that perhaps they must ever more or less exist, except where a despotism, by simply extinguishing liberty, effectually prevents its abuse.



# V

JOHN STUART MILL

ON LIBERTY

OF THE LIMITS TO THE AUTHORITY OF SOCIETY  
OVER THE INDIVIDUAL

WHAT, then, is the rightful limit to the sovereignty of the individual over himself? Where does the authority of society begin? How much of human life should be assigned to individuality, and how much to society?

Each will receive its proper share, if each has that which more particularly concerns it. To individuality should belong the part of life in which it is chiefly the individual that is interested; to society, the part which chiefly interests society.

Though society is not founded on a contract, and though no good purpose is answered by inventing a contract in order to deduce social obligations from it, every one who receives the protection of society owes a return for the benefit, and the fact of living in society renders it indispensable that each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the rest. This conduct consists, first, in not injuring the interests of one another; or rather certain interests, which, either by express legal provision or by tacit understanding, ought to be considered as rights; and



secondly, in each person's bearing his share (to be fixed on some equitable principle) of the labours and sacrifices incurred for defending the society or its members from injury and molestation. These conditions society is justified in enforcing, at all costs to those who endeavour to withhold fulfilment. Nor is this all that society may do. The acts of an individual may be hurtful to others, or wanting in due consideration for their welfare, without going to the length of violating any of their constituted rights. The offender may then be justly punished by opinion, though not by law. As soon as any part of a person's conduct affects prejudicially the interests of others, society has jurisdiction over it, and the question whether the general welfare will or will not be promoted by interfering with it, becomes open to discussion. But there is no room for entertaining any such question when a person's conduct affects the interests of no persons besides himself, or needs not affect them unless they like (all the persons concerned being of full age, and the ordinary amount of understanding). In all such cases, there should be perfect freedom, legal and social, to do the action and stand the consequences.

It would be a great misunderstanding of this doctrine to suppose that it is one of selfish indifference, which pretends that human beings have no business with each other's conduct in life, and that they should not concern themselves about the well-doing or well-being of one another, unless their own interest is involved. Instead of any diminution, there is need of a great increase of disinterested exertion to promote the good of others. But disinterested benevolence can find other instruments



to persuade people to their good than whips and scourges, either of the literal or the metaphorical sort. I am the last person to undervalue the self-regarding virtues ; they are only second in importance, if even second, to the social. It is equally the business of education to cultivate both. But even education works by conviction and persuasion as well as by compulsion. and it is by the former only that, when the period of education is passed, the self-regarding virtues should be inculcated. Human beings owe to each other help to distinguish the better from the worse, and encouragement to choose the former and avoid the latter. They should be for ever stimulating each other to increased exercise of their higher faculties, and increased direction of their feelings and aims towards wise instead of foolish, elevating instead of degrading, objects and contemplations. But neither one person, nor any number of persons, is warranted in saying to another human creature of ripe years, that he shall not do with his life for his own benefit what he chooses to do with it. He is the person most interested in his own well-being : the interest which any other person, except in cases of strong personal attachment, can have in it, is trifling, compared with that which he himself has ; the interest which society has in him individually (except as to his conduct to others) is fractional, and altogether indirect ; while with respect to his own feelings and circumstances, the most ordinary man or woman has means of knowledge immeasurably surpassing those that can be possessed by anyone else. The interference of society to overrule his judgement and purposes in what only regards himself must be grounded on general



presumptions ; which may be altogether wrong, and even if right, are as likely as not to be misapplied to individual cases, by persons no better acquainted with the circumstances of such cases than those are who look at them merely from without. In this department, therefore, of human affairs, Individuality has its proper field of action. In the conduct of human beings towards one another it is necessary that general rules should for the most part be observed, in order that people may know what they have to expect : but in each person's own concerns his individual spontaneity is entitled to free exercise. Considerations to aid his judgement, exhortations to strengthen his will, may be offered to him, even obtruded on him, by others : but he himself is the final judge. All errors which he is likely to commit against advice and warning are far outweighed by the evil of allowing others to constrain him to what they deem his good.

I do not mean that the feelings with which a person is regarded by others ought not to be in any way affected by his self-regarding qualities or deficiencies. This is neither possible nor desirable. If he is eminent in any of the qualities which conduce to his own good, he is, so far, a proper object of admiration. He is so much the nearer to the ideal perfection of human nature. If he is grossly deficient in those qualities, a sentiment the opposite of admiration will follow. There is a degree of folly, and a degree of what may be called (though the phrase is not unobjectionable) lowness or depravation of taste, which, though it cannot justify doing harm to the person who manifests it, renders him necessarily and properly a subject of distaste, or, in



extreme cases, even of contempt : a person could not have the opposite qualities in due strength without entertaining these feelings. Though doing no wrong to anyone, a person may so act as to compel us to judge him, and feel to him, as a fool, or as a being of an inferior order : and since this judgement and feeling are a fact which he would prefer to avoid, it is doing him a service to warn him of it beforehand, as of any other disagreeable consequence to which he exposes himself. It would be well, indeed, if this good office were much more freely rendered than the common notions of politeness at present permit, and if one person could honestly point out to another that he thinks him in fault, without being considered unmannerly or presuming. We have a right, also, in various ways, to act upon our unfavourable opinion of anyone, not to the oppression of his individuality, but in the exercise of ours. We are not bound, for example, to seek his society ; we have a right to avoid (though not to parade the avoidance), for we have a right to choose the society most acceptable to us. We have a right, and it may be our duty, to caution others against him, if we think his example or conversation likely to have a pernicious effect on those with whom he associates. We may give others a preference over him in optional good offices, except those which tend to his improvement. In these various modes a person may suffer very severe penalties at the hands of others for faults which directly concern only himself ; but he suffers these penalties only in so far as they are the natural and, as it were, the spontaneous consequences of the faults themselves, not because they are purposely inflicted on him for



the sake of punishment. A person who shows rashness, obstinacy, self-conceit—who cannot live within moderate means—who cannot restrain himself from hurtful indulgences—who pursues animal pleasures at the expense of those of feeling and intellect—must expect to be lowered in the opinion of others, and to have a less share of their favourable sentiments ; but of this he has no right to complain, unless he has merited their favour by special excellence in his social relations, and has thus established a title to their good offices, which is not affected by his demerits towards himself.

What I contend for is, that the inconveniences which are strictly inseparable from the unfavourable judgement of others, are the only ones to which a person should ever be subjected for that portion of his conduct and character which concerns his own good, but which does not affect the interest of others in their relations with him. Acts injurious to others require a totally different treatment. Encroachment on their rights ; infliction on them of any loss or damage not justified by his own rights ; falsehood or duplicity in dealing with them ; unfair or ungenerous use of advantages over them ; even selfish abstinence from defending them against injury—these are fit objects of moral reprobation, and, in grave cases, of moral retribution and punishment. And not only these acts, but the dispositions which lead to them, are properly immoral, and fit subjects of disapprobation which may rise to abhorrence. Cruelty of disposition ; malice and ill-nature ; that most anti-social and odious of all passions, envy ; dissimulation and insincerity,



irascibility on insufficient cause, and resentment disproportioned to the provocation ; the love of domineering over others ; the desire to engross more than one's share of advantages (the *πλεονεξία* of the Greeks) ; the pride which derives gratification from the abasement of others ; the egotism which thinks self and its concerns more important than everything else, and decides all doubtful questions in its own favour—these are moral vices, and constitute a bad and odious moral character : unlike the self-regarding faults previously mentioned, which are not properly immoralities, and to whatever pitch they may be carried, do not constitute wickedness. They may be proofs of any amount of folly, or want of personal dignity and self-respect ; but they are only a subject of moral reprobation when they involve a breach of duty to others, for whose sake the individual is bound to have care for himself. What are called duties to ourselves are not socially obligatory, unless circumstances render them at the same time duties to others. The term duty to oneself, when it means anything more than prudence, means self-respect or self-development, and for none of these is anyone accountable to his fellow creatures, because for none of them is it for the good of mankind that he be held accountable to them.

The distinction between the loss of consideration which a person may rightly incur by defect of prudence or of personal dignity, and the reprobation which is due to him for an offence against the rights of others, is not a merely nominal distinction. It makes a vast difference both in our feelings and in our conduct towards him whether he displeases us in things in which



we think we have a right to control him, or in things in which we know that we have not. If he displeases us, we may express our distaste, and we may stand aloof from a person as well as from a thing that displeases us : but we shall not therefore feel called on to make his life uncomfortable. We shall reflect that he already bears, or will bear, the whole penalty of his error ; if he spoils his life by mismanagement, we shall not, for that reason, desire to spoil it still further : instead of wishing to punish him, we shall rather endeavour to alleviate his punishment, by showing him how he may avoid or cure the evils his conduct tends to bring upon him. He may be to us an object of pity, perhaps of dislike, but not of anger or resentment ; we shall not treat him like an enemy of society : the worst we shall think ourselves justified in doing is leaving him to himself, if we do not interfere benevolently by showing interest or concern for him. It is far otherwise if he has infringed the rules necessary for the protection of his fellow-creatures, individually or collectively. The evil consequence of his acts do not then fall on himself, but on others ; and society, as the protector of all its members, must retaliate on him ; must inflict pain on him for the express purpose of punishment, and must take care that it be sufficiently severe. In the one case, he is an offender at our bar, and we are called on not only to sit in judgement on him, but, in one shape or another, to execute our own sentence : in the other case, it is not our part to inflict any suffering on him, except what may incidentally follow from our using the same liberty in the regulation of our own affairs, which we allow to him in his.



The distinction here pointed out between the part of a person's life which concerns only himself, and that which concerns others, many persons will refuse to admit. How (it may be asked) can any part of the conduct of a member of society be a matter of indifference to the other members? No person is an entirely isolated being: it is impossible for a person to do anything seriously or permanently hurtful to himself, without mischief reaching at least to his near connexions, and often far beyond them. If he injures his property, he does harm to those who directly or indirectly derived support from it, and usually diminishes, by a greater or less amount, the general resources of the community. If he deteriorates his bodily or mental faculties, he not only brings evil upon all who depended on him for any portion of their happiness, but disqualifies himself for rendering the services which he owes to his fellow-creatures generally; perhaps becomes a burthen on their affection or benevolence; and if such conduct were very frequent, hardly any offence that is committed would detract more from the general sum of good. Finally, if by his vices or follies a person does no direct harm to others, he is nevertheless (it may be said) injurious by his example; and ought to be compelled to control himself, for the sake of those whom the sight or knowledge of his conduct might corrupt or mislead.

And even (it will be added) if the consequences of misconduct could be confined to the vicious or thoughtless individual, ought society to abandon to their own guidance those who are manifestly unfit for it? If protection against themselves is confessedly due to



children and persons under age, is not society equally bound to afford it to persons of mature years who are equally incapable of self-government? If gambling, or drunkenness, or incontinence, or idleness, or uncleanness, are as injurious to happiness, and as great a hindrance to improvement, as many or most of the acts prohibited by law, why (it may be asked) should not law, so far as is consistent with practicability and social convenience, endeavour to repress these also? And as a supplement to the unavoidable imperfections of law, ought not opinion at least to organize a powerful police against these vices, and visit rigidly with social penalties those who are known to practise them? There is no question here (it may be said) about restricting individuality, or impeding the trial of new and original experiments in living. The only things it is sought to prevent are things which have been tried and condemned from the beginning of the world until now; things which experience has shown not to be useful or suitable to any person's individuality. There must be some length of time and amount of experience after which a moral or prudential truth may be regarded as established: and it is merely desired to prevent generation after generation from falling over the same precipice which has been fatal to their predecessors.

I fully admit that the mischief which a person does to himself may seriously affect, both through their sympathies and their interests, those nearly connected with him and, in a minor degree, society at large. When, by conduct of this sort, a person is led to violate a distinct and assignable obligation to any other person or persons, the case is taken out of the self-regarding



class, and becomes amenable to moral disapprobation in the proper sense of the term. If, for example, a man, through intemperance or extravagance, becomes unable to pay his debts, or, having undertaken the moral responsibility of a family, becomes from the same cause incapable of supporting or educating them, he is deservedly reprobated, and might be justly punished ; but it is for the breach of duty to his family or creditors, not for the extravagance. If the resources which ought to have been devoted to them, had been diverted from them for the most prudent investment, the moral culpability would have been the same. George Barnwell murdered his uncle to get money for his mistress, but if he had done it to set himself up in business, he would equally have been hanged. Again, in the frequent case of a man who causes grief to his family by addiction to bad habits, he deserves reproach for his unkindness or ingratitude ; but so he may for cultivating habits not in themselves vicious, if they are painful to those with whom he passes his life, or who from personal ties are dependent on him for their comfort. Whoever fails in the consideration generally due to the interests and feelings of others, not being compelled by some more imperative duty, or justified by allowable self-preference, is a subject of moral disapprobation for that failure, but not for the cause of it, nor for the errors, merely personal to himself, which may have remotely led to it. In like manner, when a person disables himself, by conduct purely self-regarding, from the performance of some definite duty incumbent on him to the public, he is guilty of a social offence. No person ought to be punished simply for



being drunk ; but a soldier or a policeman should be punished for being drunk on duty. Whenever, in short, there is a definite damage, or a definite risk of damage, either to an individual or to the public, the case is taken out of the province of liberty, and placed in that of morality or law.

But with regard to the merely contingent, or, as it may be called, constructive injury which a person causes to society, by conduct which neither violates any specific duty to the public, nor occasions perceptible hurt to any assignable individual except himself ; the inconvenience is one which society can afford to bear, for the sake of the greater good of human freedom. If grown persons are to be punished for not taking proper care of themselves, I would rather it were for their own sake, than under pretence of preventing them from impairing their capacity or rendering to society benefits which society does not pretend it has a right to exact. But I cannot consent to argue the point as if society had no means of bringing its weaker members up to its ordinary standard of rational conduct, except waiting till they do something irrational, and then punishing them, legally or morally, for it. Society has had absolute power over them during all the early portion of their existence : it has had the whole period of childhood and nonage in which to try whether it could make them capable of rational conduct in life. The existing generation is master both of the training and the entire circumstances of the generation to come ; it cannot indeed make them perfectly wise and good, because it is itself so lamentably deficient in goodness and wisdom ; and its best efforts are not always, in



individual cases, its most successful ones ; but it is perfectly well able to make the rising generation, as a whole, as good as, and a little better than, itself. If society lets any considerable number of its members grow up mere children, incapable of being acted on by rational consideration of distant motives, society has itself to blame for the consequences. Armed not only with all the powers of education, but with the ascendancy which the authority of a received opinion always exercises over the minds who are least fitted to judge for themselves ; and aided by the *natural* penalties which cannot be prevented from falling on those who incur the distaste or the contempt of those who know them ; let not society pretend that it needs, besides all this, the power to issue commands and enforce obedience in the personal concerns of individuals, in which, on all principles of justice and policy, the decision ought to rest with those who are to abide the consequences. Nor is there anything which tends more to discredit and frustrate the better means of influencing conduct than a resort to the worse. If there be among those whom it is attempted to coerce into prudence or temperance any of the material of which vigorous and independent characters are made, they will infallibly rebel against the yoke. No such person will ever feel that others have a right to control him in his concerns, such as they have to prevent him from injuring them in theirs ; and it easily comes to be considered a mark of spirit and courage to fly in the face of such usurped authority, and do with ostentation the exact opposite of what it enjoins ; as in the fashion of grossness which succeeded, in the time of Charles II, to the fanatical moral



intolerance of the Puritans. With respect to what is said of the necessity of protecting society from the bad example set to others by the vicious or the self-indulgent; it is true that bad example may have a pernicious effect, especially the example of doing wrong to others with impunity to the wrong-doer. But we are now speaking of conduct which, while it does no wrong to others, is supposed to do great harm to the agent himself : and I do not see how those who believe this can think otherwise than that the example, on the whole, must be more salutary than hurtful, since, if it displays the misconduct, it displays also the painful or degrading consequences which, if the conduct is justly censured, must be supposed to be in all or most cases attendant on it.

But the strongest of all the arguments against the interference of the public with purely personal conduct is that, when it does interfere, the odds are that it interferes wrongly, and in the wrong place. On questions of social morality, of duty to others, the opinion of the public, that is, of an overruling majority, though often wrong, is likely to be still oftener right ; because on such questions they are only required to judge of their own interests ; of the manner in which some mode of conduct, if allowed to be practised, would affect themselves. But the opinion of a similar majority, imposed as a law on the minority, on questions of self-regarding conduct, is quite as likely to be wrong as right ; for in these cases public opinion means, at the best, some people's opinion of what is good or bad for other people ; while very often it does not even mean that ; the public, with the most perfect indifference,



passing over the pleasure or convenience of those whose conduct they censure, and considering only their own preference. There are many who consider as an injury to themselves any conduct which they have a distaste for, and resent it as an outrage to their feelings ; as a religious bigot, when charged with disregarding the religious feelings of others, has been known to retort that they disregard his feelings, by persisting in their abominable worship or creed. But there is no parity between the feeling of a person for his own opinion, and the feeling of another who is offended at his holding it ; no more than between the desire of a thief to take a purse, and the desire of the right owner to keep it. And a person's taste is as much his own peculiar concern as his opinion or his purse. It is easy for anyone to imagine an ideal public which leaves the freedom and choice of individuals in all uncertain matters undisturbed, and only requires them to abstain from modes of conduct which universal experience has condemned. But where has there been seen a public which set any such limit to its censorship ? or when does the public trouble itself about universal experience ? In its interferences with personal conduct it is seldom thinking of anything but the enormity of acting or feeling differently from itself ; and this standard of judgement, thinly disguised, is held up to mankind as the dictate of religion and philosophy, by nine-tenths of all moralists and speculative writers. These teach that things are right because they are right ; because we feel them to be so. They tell us to search in our own minds and hearts for laws of conduct binding on ourselves and on all others. What can the poor public do



but apply these instructions, and make their own personal feelings of good and evil, if they are tolerably unanimous in them, obligatory on all the world ?

The evil here pointed out is not one which exists only in theory ; and it may perhaps be expected that I should specify the instances in which the public of this age and country improperly invests its own preferences with the character of moral laws. I am not writing an essay on the aberrations of existing moral feeling. That is too weighty a subject to be discussed parenthetically, and by way of illustration. Yet examples are necessary to show that the principle I maintain is of serious and practical moment, and that I am not endeavouring to erect a barrier against imaginary evils. And it is not difficult to show, by abundant instances, that to extend the bounds of what may be called moral police, until it encroaches on the most unquestionably legitimate liberty of the individual, is one of the most universal of all human propensities.

As a first instance, consider the antipathies which men cherish on no better grounds than that persons whose religious opinions are different from theirs do not practise their religious observances, especially their religious abstinences. To cite a rather trivial example, nothing in the creed or practice of Christians does more to envenom the hatred of Mohammedans against them than the fact of their eating pork. There are few acts which Christians and Europeans regard with more unaffected disgust than Mussulmans regard this particular mode of satisfying hunger. It is, in the first place, an offence against their religion ; but this circumstance by no means explains either the degree



or the kind of their repugnance ; for wine also is forbidden by their religion, and to partake of it is by all Mussulmans accounted wrong, but not disgusting. Their aversion to the flesh of the 'unclean beast' is, on the contrary, of that peculiar character, resembling an instinctive antipathy, which the idea of uncleanness, when once it thoroughly sinks into the feelings, seems always to excite even in those whose personal habits are anything but scrupulously cleanly, and of which the sentiment of religious impurity, so intense in the Hindus, is a remarkable example. Suppose now that in a people, of whom the majority were Mussulmans, that majority should insist upon not permitting pork to be eaten within the limits of the country. This would be nothing new in Mohammedan countries.<sup>1</sup> Would it be a legitimate exercise of the moral authority of public opinion ? and if not, why not ? The practice is really revolting to such a public. They also sincerely think it is forbidden and abhorred by the Deity. Neither could the prohibition be censured as religious persecution. It might be religious in its origin, but it would not be persecution for religion, since nobody's religion makes it a duty to eat pork. The only tenable

<sup>1</sup> The case of the Bombay Parsees is a curious instance in point. When this industrious and enterprising tribe, the descendants of the Persian fire-worshippers, flying from their native country before the Caliphs, arrived in Western India, they were admitted to toleration by the Hindu sovereigns, on condition of not eating beef. When those regions afterwards fell under the dominion of Mohammedan conquerors, the Parsees obtained from them a continuance of indulgence, on condition of refraining from pork. What was at first obedience to authority became a second nature, and the Parsees to this day abstain both from beef and pork. Though not required by their religion, the double abstinence has had time to grow into a custom of their tribe ; and custom, in the East, is a religion.



ground of condemnation would be that with the personal tastes and self-regarding concerns of individuals the public has no business to interfere.

To come somewhat nearer home : the majority of Spaniards consider it a gross impiety, offensive in the highest degree to the Supreme Being, to worship him in any other manner than the Roman Catholic ; and no other public worship is lawful on Spanish soil. The people of all Southern Europe look upon a married clergy as not only irreligious, but unchaste, indecent, gross, disgusting. What do Protestants think of these perfectly sincere feelings, and of the attempt to enforce them against non-Catholics ? Yet, if mankind are justified in interfering with each other's liberty in things which do not concern the interests of others, on what principle is it possible consistently to exclude these cases ? or who can blame people for desiring to suppress what they regard as a scandal in the sight of God and man ? No stronger case can be shown for prohibiting anything which is regarded as a personal immorality, than is made out for suppressing these practices in the eyes of those who regard them as impieties ; and unless we are willing to adopt the logic of persecutors, and to say that we may persecute others because we are right, and that they must not persecute us because they are wrong, we must beware of admitting a principle of which we should resent as a gross injustice the application to ourselves.

The preceding instances may be objected to, although unreasonably, as drawn from contingencies impossible among us : opinion, in this country, not being likely to enforce abstinence from meats, or to interfere with



people for worshipping, and for either marrying or not marrying, according to their creed or inclination. The next example, however, shall be taken from an interference with liberty which we have by no means passed all danger of. Wherever the Puritans have been sufficiently powerful, as in New England, and in Great Britain at the time of the Commonwealth, they have endeavoured, with considerable success, to put down all public, and nearly all private, amusements : especially music, dancing, public games, or other assemblages for purposes of diversion, and the theatre. There are still in this country large bodies of persons by whose notions of morality and religion these recreations are condemned ; and those persons belonging chiefly to the middle class, who are the ascendant power in the present social and political condition of the kingdom, it is by no means impossible that persons of these sentiments may at some time or other command a majority in Parliament. How will the remaining portion of the community like to have the amusement that shall be permitted to them regulated by the religious and moral sentiments of the stricter Calvinists and Methodists ? Would they not, with considerable peremptoriness, desire these intrusively pious members of society to mind their own business ? This is precisely what should be said to every government and every public, who have the pretension that no person shall enjoy any pleasure which they think wrong. But if the principle of the pretension be admitted, no one can reasonably object to its being acted on in the sense of the majority, or other preponderating power in the country ; and all persons must be ready to conform to



the idea of a Christian commonwealth, as understood by the early settlers in New England, if a religious profession similar to theirs should ever succeed in regaining its lost ground, as religions supposed to be declining have so often been known to do.

To imagine another contingency, perhaps more likely to be realized than the one last mentioned. There is confessedly a strong tendency in the modern world towards a democratic constitution of society, accompanied or not by popular political institutions. It is affirmed that in the country where this tendency is most completely realized—where both society and the government are most democratic—the United States—the feeling of the majority, to whom any appearance of a more showy or costly style of living than they can hope to rival is disagreeable, operates as a tolerably effectual sumptuary law, and that in many parts of the Union it is really difficult for a person possessing a very large income to find any mode of spending it which will not incur popular disapprobation. Though such statements as these are doubtless much exaggerated as a representation of existing facts, the state of things they describe is not only a conceivable and possible, but a probable result of democratic feeling, combined with the notion that the public has a right to a veto on the manner in which individuals shall spend their incomes. We have only further to suppose a considerable diffusion of Socialist opinions, and it may become infamous in the eyes of the majority to possess more property than some very small amount, or any income not earned by manual labour. Opinions similar in principle to these already prevail widely



among the artisan class, and weigh oppressively on those who are amenable to the opinion chiefly of that class, namely, its own members. It is known that the bad workmen who form the majority of the operatives in many branches of industry, are decidedly of opinion that bad workmen ought to receive the same wages as good, and that no one ought to be allowed, through piece-work or otherwise, to earn by superior skill or industry more than others can without it. And they employ a moral police, which occasionally becomes a physical one, to deter skilful workmen from receiving, and employers from giving, a larger remuneration for a more useful service. If the public have any jurisdiction over private concerns, I cannot see that these people are in fault, or that any individual's particular public can be blamed for asserting the same authority over his individual conduct which the general public asserts over people in general.

But, without dwelling upon supposititious cases, there are, in our own day, gross usurpations upon the liberty of private life actually practised, and still greater ones threatened with some expectation of success, and opinions propounded which assert an unlimited right in the public not only to prohibit by law everything which it thinks wrong, but, in order to get at what it thinks wrong, to prohibit a number of things which it admits to be innocent.

Under the name of preventing intemperance, the people of one English colony, and of nearly half the United States, have been interdicted by law from making any use whatever of fermented drinks, except for medical purposes : for prohibition of their sale is in



fact, as it is intended to be, prohibition of their use. And though the impracticability of executing the law has caused its repeal in several of the States which had adopted it, including the one from which it derives its name, an attempt has notwithstanding been commenced, and is prosecuted with considerable zeal by many of the professed philanthropists, to agitate for a similar law in this country. The association, or 'Alliance' as it terms itself, which has been formed for this purpose, has acquired some notoriety through the publicity given to a correspondence between its secretary and one of the very few English public men who hold that a politician's opinions ought to be founded on principles. Lord Stanley's share in this correspondence is calculated to strengthen the hopes already built on him, by those who know how rare such qualities as are manifested in some of his public appearances unhappily are among those who figure in political life. The organ of the Alliance, who would 'deeply deplore the recognition of any principle which could be wrested to justify bigotry and persecution', undertakes to point out the 'broad and impassable barrier' which divides such principles from those of the association. 'All matters relating to thought, opinion, conscience, appear to me,' he says, 'to be without the sphere of legislation ; all pertaining to social act, habit, relation subject only to a discretionary power vested in the State itself, and not in the individual, to be within it.' No mention is made of a third class, different from either of these, viz. acts and habits which are not social, but individual ; although it is to this class, surely, that the act of drinking fermented liquors belongs. Selling



fermented liquors, however, is trading, and trading is a social act. But the infringement complained of is not on the liberty of the seller, but on that of the buyer and consumer ; since the State might just as well forbid him to drink wine as purposely make it impossible for him to obtain it. The secretary, however, says, ' I claim, as a citizen, a right to legislate whenever my social rights are invaded by the social act of another.' And now for the definition of these ' social rights '. ' If anything invades my social rights, certainly the traffic in strong drink does. It destroys my primary right of security, by constantly creating and stimulating social disorder. It invades my right of equality, by deriving a profit from the creation of a misery I am taxed to support. It impedes my right to free moral and intellectual development, by surrounding my path with dangers, and by weakening and demoralizing society, from which I have a right to claim mutual aid and intercourse.' A theory of ' social rights ' the like of which probably never before found its way into distinct language : being nothing short of this—that it is the absolute social right of every individual, that every other individual shall act in every respect exactly as he ought ; that whosoever fails thereof in the smallest particular violates my social right, and entitles me to demand from the legislature the removal of the grievance. So monstrous a principle is far more dangerous than any single interference with liberty ; there is no violation of liberty which it would not justify ; it acknowledges no right to any freedom whatever, except perhaps to that of holding opinions in secret, without ever disclosing them : for, the moment



an opinion which I consider noxious passes anyone's lips, it invades all the 'social rights' attributed to me by the Alliance. The doctrine ascribes to all mankind a vested interest in each other's moral, intellectual, and even physical perfection, to be defined by each claimant according to his own standard.

Another important example of illegitimate interference with the rightful liberty of the individual, not simply threatened, but long since carried into triumphant effect, is Sabbatarian legislation. Without doubt, abstinence on one day in the week, so far as the exigencies of life permit, from the usual daily occupation, though in no respect religiously binding on any except Jews, is a highly beneficial custom. And inasmuch as this custom cannot be observed without a general consent to that effect among the industrious classes, therefore, in so far as some persons by working may impose the same necessity on others, it may be allowable and right that the law should guarantee to each the observance by others of the custom, by suspending the greater operations of industry on a particular day. But this justification, grounded on the direct interest which others have in each individual's observance of the practice, does not apply to the self-chosen occupations in which a person may think fit to employ his leisure; nor does it hold good, in the smallest degree, for legal restrictions on amusements. It is true that the amusement of some is the day's work of others; but the pleasure, not to say the useful recreation, of many, is worth the labour of the few, provided the occupation is freely chosen, and can be freely resigned. The operatives are perfectly right in



thinking that if all worked on Sunday, seven days' work would have to be given for six days' wages ; but so long as the great mass of employments are suspended, the small number who for the enjoyment of others must still work, obtain a proportional increase of earnings ; and they are not obliged to follow those occupations if they prefer leisure to emolument. If a further remedy is sought, it might be found in the establishment by custom of a holiday on some other day of the week for those particular classes of persons. The only ground, therefore, on which restrictions on Sunday amusements can be defended, must be that they are religiously wrong : a motive of legislation which can never be too earnestly protested against. '*Deorum injuriæ Diis curæ.*' It remains to be proved that society or any of its officers holds a commission from on high to avenge any supposed offence to Omnipotence, which is not also a wrong to our fellow creatures. The notion that it is one man's duty that another should be religious, was the foundation of all the religious persecutions ever perpetrated, and, if admitted, would fully justify them. Though the feeling which breaks out in the repeated attempts to stop railway travelling on Sunday, in the resistance to the opening of Museums, and the like, has not the cruelty of the old persecutors, the state of mind indicated by it is fundamentally the same. It is a determination not to tolerate others in doing what is permitted by their religion, because it is not permitted by the persecutor's religion. It is a belief that God not only abominates the act of the misbeliever, but will not hold us guiltless if we leave him unmolested.

I cannot refrain from adding to these examples of ;



the little account commonly made of human liberty, the language of downright persecution which breaks out from the press of this country whenever it feels called on to notice the remarkable phenomenon of Mormonism. Much might be said on the unexpected and instructive fact that an alleged new revelation, and a religion founded on it, the product of palpable imposture, not even supported by the *prestige* of extraordinary qualities in its founder, is believed by hundreds of thousands, and has been made the foundation of a society, in the age of newspapers, railways, and the electric telegraph. What here concerns us is, that this religion, like other and better religions, has its martyrs : that its prophet and founder was, for his teaching, put to death by a mob ; that others of its adherents lost their lives by the same lawless violence ; that they were forcibly expelled, in a body, from the country in which they first grew up ; while, now that they have been chased into a solitary recess in the midst of a desert, many in this country openly declare that it would be right (only that it is not convenient) to send an expedition against them, and compel them by force to conform to the opinions of other people. The article of the Mormonite doctrine which is the chief provocative to the antipathy which thus breaks through the ordinary restraints of religious tolerance, is its sanction of polygamy ; which, though permitted to Mohammedans, and Hindus, and Chinese, seems to excite unquenchable animosity when practised by persons who speak English and profess to be a kind of Christians. No one has a deeper disapprobation than I have of this Mormon institution ;



both for other reasons, and because, far from being in any way countenanced by the principle of liberty, it is a direct infraction of that principle, being a mere riveting of the chains of one half of the community, and an emancipation of the other from reciprocity of obligation towards them. Still, it must be remembered that this relation is as much voluntary on the part of the women concerned in it, and who may be deemed the sufferers by it, as is the case with any other form of the marriage institution ; and however surprising this fact may appear, it has its explanation in the common ideas and customs of the world, which teaching women to think marriage the one thing needful, make it intelligible that many a woman should prefer being one of several wives, to not being a wife at all. Other countries are not asked to recognize such unions, or release any portion of their inhabitants from their own laws on the score of Mormonite opinions. But when the dissentients have conceded to the hostile sentiments of others far more than could justly be demanded ; when they have left the countries to which their doctrines were unacceptable, and established themselves in a remote corner of the earth, which they have been the first to render habitable to human beings ; it is difficult to see on what principles but those of tyranny they can be prevented from living there under what laws they please, provided they commit no aggression on other nations, and allow perfect freedom of departure to those who are dissatisfied with their ways. A recent writer, in some respects of considerable merit, proposes (to use his own words) not a crusade, but a *civilizade*, against this



polygamous community, to put an end to what seems to him a retrograde step in civilization. It also appears so to me, but I am not aware that any community has a right to force another to be civilized. So long as the sufferers by the bad law do not invoke assistance from other communities, I cannot admit that persons entirely unconnected with them ought to step in and require that a condition of things with which all who are directly interested appear to be satisfied, should be put an end to because it is a scandal to persons some thousands of miles distant, who have no part or concern in it. Let them send missionaries, if they please, to preach against it ; and let them, by any fair means (of which silencing the teachers is not one), oppose the progress of similar doctrines among their own people. If civilization has got the better of barbarism when barbarism had the world to itself, it is too much to profess to be afraid lest barbarism, after having been fairly got under, should revive and conquer civilization. A civilization that can thus succumb to its vanquished enemy, must first have become so degenerate, that neither its appointed priests and teachers, nor anybody else, has the capacity, or will take the trouble, to stand up for it. If this be so, the sooner such a civilization receives notice to quit the better. It can only go on from bad to worse, until destroyed and regenerated (like the Western Empire) by energetic barbarians.



## VI

### OSCAR WILDE ON SUFFERING

**SUFFERING** is one very long moment. We cannot divide it by seasons. We can only record its moods, and chronicle their return. With us time itself does not progress. It revolves. It seems to circle round one centre of pain. The paralysing immobility of a life every circumstance of which is regulated after an unchangeable pattern, so that we eat and drink and lie down and pray, or kneel at least for prayer, according to the inflexible laws of an iron formula : this immobile quality, that makes each dreadful day in the very minutest detail like its brother, seems to communicate itself to those external forces the very essence of whose existence is ceaseless change. Of seed-time or harvest, of the reapers bending over the corn, or the grape gatherers threading through the vines, of the grass in the orchard made white with broken blossoms or strewn with fallen fruit : of these we know nothing and can know nothing.

For us there is only one season, the season of sorrow. The very sun and moon seem taken from us. Outside, the day may be blue and gold, but the light that creeps down through the thickly-muffled glass of the small iron-barred window beneath which one sits is grey and niggard. It is always twilight in one's cell, as it is always twilight in one's heart. And in the sphere of thought, no less than in the sphere of time, motion is no more. The thing that you personally have long ago



forgotten, or can easily forget, is happening to me now, and will happen to me again tomorrow. Remember this, and you will be able to understand a little of why I am writing, and in this manner writing. . . .

A week later, I am transferred here. Three more months go over and my mother dies. No one knew how deeply I loved and honoured her. Her death was terrible to me ; but I, once a lord of language, have no words in which to express my anguish and my shame. She and my father had bequeathed me a name they had made noble and honoured, not merely in literature, art, archaeology, and science, but in the public history of my own country, in its evolution as a nation. I had disgraced that name eternally. I had made it a low byword among low people. I had dragged it through the very mire. I had given it to brutes that they might make it brutal, and to fools that they might turn it into a synonym for folly. What I suffered then, and still suffer, is not for pen to write or paper to record. My wife, always kind and gentle to me, rather than that I should hear the news from indifferent lips, travelled, ill as she was, all the way from Genoa to England to break to me herself the tidings of so irreparable, so irremediable, a loss. Messages of sympathy reached me from all who had still affection for me. Even people who had not known me personally, hearing that a new sorrow had broken into my life, wrote to ask that some expression of their condolence should be conveyed to me. . . .

Three months go over. The calendar of my daily conduct and labour that hangs on the outside of my cell door, with my name and sentence written upon it, tells me that it is May. . . .



Prosperity, pleasure and success, may be rough of grain and common in fibre, but sorrow is the most sensitive of all created things. There is nothing that stirs in the whole world of thought to which sorrow does not vibrate in terrible and exquisite pulsation. The thin beaten-out leaf of tremulous gold that chronicles the direction of forces the eye cannot see is in comparison coarse. It is a wound that bleeds when any hand but that of love touches it, and even then must bleed again, though not in pain.

Where there is sorrow there is holy ground. Some day people will realize what this means. They will know nothing of life till they do. — and natures like his can realize it. When I was brought down from my prison to the Court of Bankruptcy, between two policemen, — waited in the long dreary corridor that, before the whole crowd, whom no action so sweet and simple hushed into silence, he might gravely raise his hat to me, as, handcuffed and with bowed head, I passed him by. Men have gone to heaven for smaller things than that. It was in this spirit, and with this mode of love, that the saints knelt down to wash the feet of the poor, or stooped to kiss the leper on the cheek. I have never said one single word to him about what he did. I do not know to the present moment whether he is aware that I was even conscious of his action. It is not a thing for which one can render formal thanks in formal words. I store it in the treasure-house of my heart. I keep it there as a secret debt that I am glad to think I can never possibly repay. It is embalmed and kept sweet by the myrrh and cassia of many tears. When wisdom has been profitless to me, philosophy



barred, and the proverbs and phrases of those who have sought to give me consolation as dust and ashes in my mouth, the memory of that little, lovely, 'silent' act of love has unsealed for me all the wells of pity : made the desert blossom like a rose, and brought me out of the bitterness of lonely exile into harmony with the wounded, broken, and great heart of the world. When people are able to understand, not merely how beautiful ——'s action was, but why it meant so much to me, and always will mean so much, then, perhaps, they will realize how and in what spirit they should approach me. . . .

The poor are wise, more charitable, more kind, more sensitive than we are. In their eyes prison is a tragedy in a man's life, a misfortune, a casualty, something that calls for sympathy in others. They speak of one who is in prison as of one who is 'in trouble' simply. It is the phrase they always use, and the expression has the perfect wisdom of love in it. With people of our own rank it is different. With us, prison makes a man a pariah. I, and such as I am, have hardly any right to air and sun. Our presence taints the pleasures of others. We are unwelcome when we reappear. To revisit the glimpses of the moon is not for us. Our very children are taken away. Those lovely links with humanity are broken. We are doomed to be solitary, while our sons still live. We are denied the one thing that might heal us and keep us, that might bring balm to the bruised heart, and peace to the soul in pain. . . .

I must say to myself that I ruined myself, and that nobody great or small can be ruined except by his own hand. I am quite ready to say so. I am trying to say so, though they may not think it at the present moment.



This pitiless indictment I bring without pity against myself. Terrible as was what the world did to me, what I did to myself was far more terrible still.

I was a man who stood in symbolic relations to the art and culture of my age. I had realized this for myself at the very dawn of my manhood, and had forced my age to realize it afterwards. Few men hold such a position in their own lifetime, and have it so acknowledged. It is usually discerned, if discerned at all, by the historian, or the critic, long after both the man and his age have passed away. With me it was different. I felt it myself, and made others feel it. Byron was a symbolic figure, but his relations were to the passion of his age and its weariness of passion. Mine were to something more noble, more permanent, of more vital issue, of larger scope.

The gods had given me almost everything. But I let myself be lured into long spells of senseless and sensual ease. I amused myself with being a *flâneur*, a dandy, a man of fashion. I surrounded myself with the smaller natures and the meaner minds. I became the spendthrift of my own genius, and to waste an eternal youth gave me a curious joy. Tired of being on the heights, I deliberately went to the depths in the search for new sensation. What the paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, perversity became to me in the sphere of passion. Desire, at the end, was a malady, or a madness, or both. I grew careless of the lives of others. I took pleasure where it pleased me, and passed on. I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character, and that therefore what one has done in the secret chamber one



has some day to cry aloud on the housetop. I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace. There is only one thing for me now, absolute humility.

I have lain in prison for nearly two years. Out of my nature has come wild despair ; an abandonment to grief that was piteous even to look at ; terrible and impotent rage ; bitterness and scorn ; anguish that wept aloud ; misery that could find no voice ; sorrow that was dumb. I have passed through every possible mood of suffering. Better than Wordsworth himself I know what Wordsworth meant when he said :

Suffering is permanent, obscure, and dark  
And has the nature of infinity.

But while there were times when I rejoiced in the idea that my sufferings were to be endless, I could not bear them to be without meaning. Now I find hidden somewhere away in my nature something that tells me that nothing in the whole world is meaningless, and suffering least of all. That something hidden away in my nature, like a treasure in a field, is Humility.

It is the last thing left in me, and the best : the ultimate discovery at which I have arrived, the starting-point for a fresh development. It has come to me right out of myself, so I know that it has come at the proper time. It could not have come before, nor later. Had anyone told me of it, I would have rejected it. Had it been brought to me, I would have refused it. As I found it, I want to keep it. I must do so. It is the one thing that has in it the elements of life, of a new life, a *Vita Nuova* for me. Of all things it is the



strangest. One cannot acquire it, except by surrendering everything that one has. It is only when one has lost all things, that one knows that one possesses it.

Now I have realized that it is in me, I see quite clearly what I ought to do ; in fact, must do. And when I use such a phrase as that, I need not say that I am not alluding to any external sanction or command. I admit none. I am far more of an individualist than I ever was. Nothing seems to me of the smallest value except what one gets out of oneself. My nature is seeking a fresh mode of self-realization. That is all I am concerned with. And the first thing that I have got to do is to free myself from any possible bitterness of feeling against the world.

I am completely penniless, and absolutely homeless. Yet there are worse things in the world than that. I am quite candid when I say that rather than go out from this prison with bitterness in my heart against the world, I would gladly and readily beg my bread from door to door. If I got nothing from the house of the rich I would get something at the house of the poor. Those who have much are often greedy ; those who have little always share. I would not a bit mind sleeping in the cool grass in summer, and when winter came on sheltering myself by the warm close-thatched rick, or under the penthouse of a great barn, provided I had love in my heart. The external things of life seem to me now of no importance at all. You can see to what intensity of individualism I have arrived—or am arriving rather, for the journey is long, and ‘ where I walk there are thorns ’.

Of course I know that to ask alms on the highway



is not to be my lot, and that if ever I lie in the cool grass at night-time it will be to write sonnets to the moon. When I go out of prison, R—— will be waiting for me on the other side of the big iron-studded gate, and he is the symbol, not merely of his own affection, but of the affection of many others besides. I believe I am to have enough to live on for about eighteen months at any rate, so that if I may not write beautiful books, I may at least read beautiful books ; and what joy can be greater ? After that, I hope to be able to recreate my creative faculty.

But were things different : had I not a friend left in the world ; were there not a single house open to me in pity ; had I to accept the wallet and ragged cloak of sheer penury : as long as I am free from all resentment, hardness and scorn, I would be able to face the life with much more calm and confidence than I would were my body in purple and fine linen, and the soul within me sick with hate.

And I really shall have no difficulty. When you really want love you will find it waiting for you.

I need not say that my task does not end there. It would be comparatively easy if it did. There is much more before me. I have hills far steeper to climb, valleys much darker to pass through. And I have to get it all out of myself. Neither religion, morality, nor reason can help me at all.

Morality does not help me. I am a born antinomian. I am one of those who are made for exceptions, not for laws. But while I see that there is nothing wrong in what one does, I see that there is something wrong in what one becomes. It is well to have learned that.



## VII

A. C. BENSON

### FROM A COLLEGE WINDOW

I HAVE lately come to perceive that the one thing which gives value to any piece of art, whether it be book, or picture, or music, is that subtle and evasive thing which is called personality. No amount of labour, of zest, even of accomplishment, can make up for the absence of this quality. It must be an almost wholly instinctive thing, I believe. Of course, the mere presence of personality in a work of art is not sufficient, because the personality revealed may be lacking in charm ; and charm, again, is an instinctive thing. No artist can set out to capture charm ; he will toil all the night and take nothing ; but what every artist can and must aim at, is to have a perfectly sincere point of view. He must take his chance as to whether his point of view is an attractive one ; but sincerity is the one indispensable thing. It is useless to take opinions on trust, to retail them, to adopt them ; they must be formed, created, truly felt. The work of a sincere artist is almost certain to have some value ; the work of an insincere artist is of its very nature worthless.

I mean to try, in the pages that follow, to be as sincere as I can. It is not an easy task, though it may seem so ; for it means a certain disentangling of the things that one has perceived and felt for oneself from



the prejudices and preferences that have been inherited, or stuck like burrs upon the soul by education and circumstance.

It may be asked why I should thus obtrude my point of view in print ; why I should not keep my precious experience to myself ; what the value of it is to other people ? Well, the answer to that is that it helps our sense of balance and proportion to know how other people are looking at life, what they expect from it, what they find in it, and what they do not find. I have myself an intense curiosity about other people's point of view, what they do when they are alone, and what they think about. Edward FitzGerald said that he wished we had more biographies of obscure persons. How often have I myself wished to ask simple, silent, deferential people, such as station-masters, butlers, gardeners, what they make of it all ! Yet one cannot do it, and even if one could, ten to one they would not or could not tell you. But here is going to be a sedate confession. I am going to take the world into my confidence, and say, if I can, what I think and feel about the little bit of experience which I call my life, which seems to me such a strange and often so bewildering a thing.

Let me speak, then, plainly of what that life has been, and tell what my point of view is. I was brought up on ordinary English lines. My father, in a busy life, held a series of what may be called high official positions. He was an idealist, who, owing to a vigorous power of practical organization and a mastery of detail, was essentially a man of affairs. Yet he contrived to be a student too. Thus, owing to the



fact that he often shifted his headquarters, I have seen a good deal of general society in several parts of England. Moreover, I was brought up in a distinctly intellectual atmosphere.

I was at a big public school and gained a scholarship at the University. I was a moderate scholar and a competent athlete ; but I will add that I had always a strong literary bent. I took in younger days little interest in history or politics and tended rather to live an inner life in the region of friendship and the artistic emotions. If I had been possessed of private means, I should, no doubt, have become a full-fledged dilettante. But that doubtful privilege was denied me, and for a good many years I lived a busy and fairly successful life as a master at a big public school. I will not dwell on this, but I will say that I gained a great interest in the science of education, and acquired profound misgivings as to the nature of the intellectual process known by the name of secondary education. More and more I began to perceive that it is conducted on diffuse, detailed, unbusiness-like lines. I tried my best, as far as it was consistent with loyalty to an established system, to correct the faulty bias. But it was with a profound relief that I found myself suddenly provided with a literary task of deep interest, and enabled to quit my scholastic labours. At the same time, I am deeply grateful for the practical experience I was enabled to gain, and even more for the many true and pleasant friendships with colleagues, parents and boys that I was allowed to form.

What a waste of mental energy it is to be careful and troubled about one's path in life ! Quite unexpectedly,



at this juncture, came my election to a college Fellowship, giving me the one life that I had always eagerly desired, and the possibility of which had always seemed closed to me.

I became then a member of a small and definite society, with a few prescribed duties, just enough, so to speak, to form a hem to my life of comparative leisure. I had acquired and kept, all through my life as a schoolmaster, the habit of continuous literary work ; not from a sense of duty, but simply from instinctive pleasure. I found myself at once at home in my small and beautiful college, rich with all kinds of ancient and venerable traditions, in buildings of humble and subtle grace. The little dark-roofed chapel, where I have a stall of my own ; the galleried hall, with its armorial glass ; the low, book-lined library ; the panelled combination-room, with its dim portraits of old worthies : how sweet a setting for a quiet life ! Then, too, I have my own spacious rooms, with a peaceful outlook into a big close, half orchard, half garden, with bird-haunted thickets and immemorial trees, bounded by a slow river.

And then, to teach me how ' to borrow life and not grow old ', the happy tide of fresh and vigorous life all about me, brisk, confident, cheerful young men, friendly, sensible, amenable, at that pleasant time when the world begins to open its rich pages of experience, undimmed at present by anxiety or care.

My college is one of the smallest in the University. Last night in Hall I sate next a distinguished man, who is, moreover, very accessible and pleasant. He unfolded to me his desires for the University. He would



like to amalgamate all the small colleges into groups, so as to have about half-a-dozen colleges in all. He said, and evidently thought, that little colleges are woefully circumscribed and petty places ; that most of the better men go to the two or three leading colleges, while the little establishments are like small backwaters out of the main stream. They elect, he said, their own men to Fellowships ; they resist improvements ; much money is wasted in management, and the whole thing is minute and feeble. I am afraid it is true in a way ; but, on the other hand, I think that a large college has its defects too. There is no real college spirit there ; it is very nice for two or three sets. But the different schools which supply a big college form each its own set there ; and if a man goes there from a leading public school, he falls into his respective set, lives under the traditions and in the gossip of his old school, and gets to know hardly anyone from other schools. Then the men who come up from smaller places just form small inferior sets of their own, and really get very little good out of the place. Big colleges keep up their prestige because the best men tend to go to them ; but I think they do very little for the ordinary men who have fewer social advantages to start with.

The only cure, said my friend, for these smaller places is to throw their Fellowships open, and try to get public-spirited and liberal-minded Dons. Then, he added, they ought to specialize in some one branch of University teaching, so that the men who belonged to a particular department would tend to go there.

Well, today was a wet day, so I did what I particularly enjoy—I went off for a slow stroll, and poked about



among some of the smaller colleges. I declare that the idea of tying them all together seemed to me to be a horrible piece of vandalism. These sweet and beautiful little places, with a quiet, dignified history and tradition of their own, are very attractive and beautiful. I went and explored a little college I am ashamed to say I had never visited before. It shows a poor plastered front to the street, but the old place is there behind the plaster. I went into a tiny, dark chapel, with a high pillared pediment of carved wood behind the altar, a rich ceiling, and some fine columned alcoves where the dignitaries sit. Out of the gallery opens a venerable library, with a regretful air of the past about its faded volumes in their high presses, as though it sadly said, 'I am of yesterday.' Then we found ourselves in a spacious panelled Hall, with a great oriel looking out into a peaceful garden, embowered in great trees, with smiling lawns. All round the Hall hung portraits of old worthies—peers, judges, and bishops, with some rubicund wigged Masters. I like to think of the obscure and yet dignified lives that have been lived in these quaint and stately chambers. I suppose that there used to be a great deal of tippling and low gossip in the old days of the vinous, idle Fellows, who hung on for life, forgetting their books, and just trying to dissipate boredom. One tends to think that it was all like that; and yet, doubtless, there were quiet lives of study and meditation led here by wise and simple men who have long since mouldered into dust. And all that dull rioting is happily over. The whole place is full of activity and happiness. There is, if anything, among the Dons, too much business, too many meetings,



too much teaching, and the life of mere study is neglected. But it pleases me to think that even now there are men who live quietly among their books, unambitious, perhaps unproductive, but forgetting the flight of time, and looking out into a pleasant garden, with its rustling trees, among the sound of mellow bells. We are, most of us, too much in a fuss nowadays to live these gentle, innocent and beautiful lives; and yet the University is a place where a poor man, if he be virtuous, may lead a life of dignity and simplicity, and refined happiness. We make the mistake of thinking that all can be done by precept, when, as a matter of fact, example is no less potent a force. To make such quiet lives possible was to a great extent what these stately and beautiful places were founded for—that there should be in the busy world a corner where activities should not be so urgent, and where life should pass like an old dream, tinged with delicate colour and soft sound. I declare I do not know that it is more virtuous to be a clerk in a bank, toiling day by day that others should be rich, than to live in thought and meditation, with a heart open to sweet influences and pure hopes. And yet it seems to be held nowadays that virtue is bound up with practical life. If a man is content to abjure wealth and to forgo marriage, to live simply without luxuries, he may spend a very dignified, gentle life here, and at the same time he may be really useful. It is a thing which is well worth doing to attempt the reconciliation between the old and the young. Boys come up here under the impression that their pastors and teachers are all about fifty; they think of them as sensible, narrow-minded men, and,



like Melchizedek, without beginning of days or end of life. They suppose that they like marking mistakes in exercises with blue pencil, and take delight in showing their power by setting punishment. It does not often occur to them that schoolmasters may be pathetically anxious to guide boys right, and to guard them from evil. They think of them as devoid of passions and prejudices, with a little dreary space to traverse before they sink into the tomb. Even in homes, how seldom does a perfectly simple human relation exist between a boy and his father ! There is often a great deal of affection on both sides, but little *camaraderie*. Little boys are odd, tiresome creatures in many ways, with savage instincts ; and I suppose many fathers feel that, if they are to maintain their authority, they must be a little distant and inscrutable. A boy goes for sympathy and companionship to his mother and sisters, not often to his father. Now a Don may do something to put this straight, if he has the will. One of the best friends I ever had was an elderly Don at my own College, who had been a contemporary of my father's. He liked young men ; and I used to consult him and ask his advice in things which I could not well consult my own contemporaries. It is not necessary to be extravagantly youthful, to slap people on the back, to run with the college boat, though that is very pleasant if it is done naturally. All that is wanted is to be accessible and quietly genial. And under such influences a young man may, without becoming elderly, get to understand the older point of view.

The difficulty is that one acquires habits and mannerisms ; one is crusty and gruff if interfered with.



But, as Pater said, to acquire habits is failure in life. Of course, one must realize limitations, and learn in what regions one can be effective. But no one need be case-hardened, smoke-dried, angular. The worst of a University is that one sees men lingering on because they must earn a living, and there is nothing else that they can do; but for a human-hearted, good-humoured and sensible man, a college life is a life where it is easy and pleasant to practise benevolence and kindness, and where a small investment of trouble pays a large percentage of happiness. Indeed, surveying it impartially—as impartially as I can—such a life seems to hold within it perhaps the greatest possibilities of happiness that life can hold. To have leisure and a degree of simple stateliness assured; to live in a wholesome dignity; to have the society of the young and generous; to have lively and intelligent talk; to have the choice of society and solitude alike; to have one's working hours respected, and one's leisure hours solaced—is not this better than to drift into the so-called tide of professional success, with its dreary hours of work, its conventional domestic background? No doubt the domestic background has its interests, its delights; but one must pay a price for everything, and I am more than willing to pay the price of celibacy for my independence.

The elderly Don in college rooms, interested in Greek particles, grumbling over his port wine, is a figure beloved by writers of fiction as a contrast to all that is brave, and bright, and wholesome in life. Could there be a more hopeless misconception? I do not know a single extant example of the species at the



University. Personally, I have no love for Greek particles, and only a very moderate taste for port wine. But I do love, with all my heart, the grace of antiquity that mellows our crumbling courts, the old tradition of multifarious humanity that has century by century entwined itself with the very fabric of the place. I love the youthful spirit that flashes and brightens in every corner of the old courts, as the wallflower that rises spring by spring with its rich orange-tawny hue, its wild scent, on the tops of our mouldering walls. It is a gracious and beautiful life for all who love peace and reflection, strength and youth. It is not a life for fiery and dominant natures, easy to conquer, keen to impress ; but it is a life for anyone who believes that the best rewards are not the brightest, who is willing humbly to lend a cheerful hand, to listen as well as to speak. It is a life for anyone who has found that there is a world of tender, wistful, delicate emotions, subdued and soft impressions, in which it is peace to live ; for one who has learned, however dimly, that wise and faithful love, quiet and patient hope, are the bread by which the spirit is nourished—that religion is not an intellectual or even an ecclesiastical thing, but a far-off and remote vision of the soul.

I know well the thoughts and hopes that I should desire to speak ; but they are evasive, subtle things, and too often, like shy birds, will hardly let you approach them. But I would add that life has not been for me a dreamy thing, lived in soft fantastic reveries ; indeed, it has been far the reverse. I have practised activity, I have mixed much with my fellows ; I have taught, worked, organized, directed. I have



watched men and boys ; I have found infinite food for mirth, for interest, and even for grief. But I have grown to feel that the ambitions which we preach and the successes for which we prepare are very often nothing but a missing of the simple road, a troubled wandering among thorny bypaths and dark mountains. I have grown to believe that the one thing worth aiming at is simplicity of heart and life : that one's relations with others should be direct and not diplomatic ; that power leaves a bitter taste in the mouth ; that meanness, and hardness, and coldness are the unforgivable sins ; that conventionality is the mother of dreariness ; that pleasure exists not in virtue of material conditions, but in the joyful heart ; that the world is a very interesting and beautiful place ; that congenial labour is the secret of happiness ; and many other things which seem, as I write them down, to be dull and trite commonplaces, but are for me the bright jewels which I have found beside the way.

It is, then, from College Windows that I look forth. But even so, though on the one hand I look upon the green and sheltered garden, with its air of secluded recollection and repose, a place of quiet pacing to and fro, of sober and joyful musing ; yet on another side I see the court, with all its fresh and shifting life, its swift interchange of study and activity ; and on yet another side I can observe the street where the infinite pageant of humanity goes to and fro, a tide full of sound and foam, of business and laughter, and of sorrow, too, and sickness, and the funeral pomp of death.

This, then, is my point of view. I can truthfully say that it is not gloomy, and equally that it is not



uproarious. I can boast of no deep philosophy, for I feel, like Dr Johnson's simple friend Edwards, that 'I have tried, too, in my time, to be a philosopher, but—I don't know how—cheerfulness was always breaking in'. Neither is it the point of view of a profound and erudite student, with a deep belief in the efficacy of useless knowledge. Neither am I a humorist, for I have loved beauty better than laughter; nor a sentimentalist, for I have abhorred a weak dalliance with personal emotions. It is hard, then, to say what I am; but it is my hope that this may emerge. My desire is but to converse with my readers, to speak as in a comfortable *tête-à-tête*, of experience, and hope, and patience. I have no wish to disguise the hard and ugly things of life; they are there, whether one disguises them or not; but I think that unless one is a professed psychologist or statistician, one gets little good by dwelling upon them. I have always believed that it is better to stimulate than to correct, to fortify rather than to punish, to help rather than to blame. If there is one attitude that I fear and hate more than another it is the attitude of the cynic. I believe with all my soul in romance: that is, in a certain high-hearted, eager dealing with life. I think that one ought to expect to find things beautiful and people interesting, not to take delight in detecting meannesses and failures. And there is yet another class of temperament for which I have a deep detestation. I mean the assured, the positive, the Pharisaical temper, that believes itself to be impregnably in the right and its opponents indubitably in the wrong; the people who deal in axioms and certainties, who think that



compromise is weak and originality vulgar. I detest authority in every form ; I am a sincere republican. In literature, in art, in life, I think that the only conclusions worth coming to are one's own conclusions. If they march with the verdict of the connoisseurs, so much the better for the connoisseurs ; if they do not so march, so much the better for oneself. Everyone cannot admire and love everything ; but let a man look at things fairly and without prejudice, and make his own selection, holding to it firmly, but not endeavouring to impose his taste upon others ; defending, if needs be, his preferences, but making no claim to authority.

The time of my life that I consider to have been wasted, from the intellectual point of view, was the time when I tried, in a spirit of dumb loyalty, to admire all the things that were said to be admirable. Better spent was the time when I was finding out that much that had received the world's approval was not to be approved, at least by me ; best of all was the time when I was learning to appraise the value of things to myself, and learning to love them for their own sake and mine.

Respect of a deferential and constitutional type is out of place in art and literature. It is a good enough guide to begin one's pilgrimage with, if one soon parts company from it. Rather one must learn to give honour where honour is due, to bow down in true reverence before all spirits that are noble and adorable, whether they wear crowns and bear titles of honour, or whether they are simple and unnoted persons, who wear no gold on their garments.

Sincerity and simplicity ! if I could only say how I reverence them, how I desire to mould my life in



accordance with them ! And I would learn, too, swiftly to detect the living spirits, whether they be young or old, in which these great qualities reign.

For I believe that there is in life a great and guarded city, of which we may be worthy to be citizens. We may, if we are blest, be always of the happy number, by some kindly gift of God ; but we may also, through misadventure and pain, through errors and blunders, learn the way thither. And sometimes we discern the city afar off, with her radiant spires and towers, her walls of strength, her gates of pearl ; and there may come a day, too, when we have found the way thither, and enter in ; happy if we go no more out, but happy, too, even if we may not rest there, because we know that, however far we wander, there is always a hearth for us and welcoming smiles.

I speak in a parable, but those who are finding the way will understand me, however dimly ; and those who have found the way, and seen a little of the glory of the place, will smile at the page and say : ‘ So he, too, is of the city.’

The city is known by many names, and wears different aspects to different hearts. But one thing is certain—that no one who has entered there is ever in any doubt again. He may wander far from the walls, he may visit it but rarely, but it stands there in peace and glory, the one true and real thing for him in mortal time and in whatever lies beyond.



## VIII

BERTRAND RUSSELL

# THE PLACE OF SCIENCE IN A LIBERAL EDUCATION

## I .

SCIENCE, to the ordinary reader of newspapers, is represented by a varying selection of sensational triumphs, such as wireless telegraphy and aeroplanes, radio-activity and the marvels of modern alchemy. It is not of this aspect of science that I wish to speak. Science, in this aspect, consists of detached up-to-date fragments, interesting only until they are replaced by something newer and more up to date, displaying nothing of the systems of patiently constructed knowledge out of which, almost as a casual incident, have come the practically useful results which interest the man in the street. The increased command over the forces of nature which is derived from science is undoubtedly an amply sufficient reason for encouraging scientific research, but this reason has been so often urged and is so easily appreciated that other reasons, to my mind quite as important, are apt to be overlooked. It is with these other reasons, especially with the intrinsic value of a scientific habit of mind in forming our outlook on the world, that I shall be concerned in what follows.

The instance of wireless telegraphy will serve to illustrate the difference between the two points of view.



Almost all the serious intellectual labour required for the possibility of this invention is due to three men—Faraday, Maxwell, and Hertz. In alternating layers of experiment and theory these three men built up the modern theory of electromagnetism, and demonstrated the identity of light with electromagnetic waves. The system which they discovered is one of profound intellectual interest, bringing together and unifying an endless variety of apparently detached phenomena, and displaying a cumulative mental power which cannot but afford delight to every generous spirit. The mechanical details which remained to be adjusted in order to utilize their discoveries for a practical system of telegraphy demanded, no doubt, very considerable ingenuity, but had not that broad sweep and that universality which could give them intrinsic interest as an object of disinterested contemplation.

From the point of view of training the mind, of giving that well-informed, impersonal outlook which constitutes culture in the good sense of this much-misused word, it seems to be generally held indisputable that a literary education is superior to one based on science. Even the warmest advocates of science are apt to rest their claims on the contention that culture ought to be sacrificed to utility. Those men of science who respect culture, when they associate with men learned in the classics, are apt to admit, not merely politely, but sincerely, a certain inferiority on their side, compensated doubtless by the services which science renders to humanity, but none the less real. And so long as this attitude exists among men of science, it tends to verify itself: the intrinsically



valuable aspects of science tend to be sacrificed to the merely useful, and little attempt is made to preserve that leisurely, systematic survey by which the finer quality of mind is formed and nourished.

But even if there be, in present fact, any such inferiority as is supposed in the educational value of science, this is, I believe, not the fault of science itself, but the fault of the spirit in which science is taught. If its full possibilities were realized by those who teach it, I believe that its capacity of producing those habits of mind which constitute the highest mental excellence would be at least as great as that of literature, and more particularly of Greek and Latin literature. In saying this I have no wish whatever to disparage a classical education. I have not myself enjoyed its benefits, and my knowledge of Greek and Latin authors is derived almost wholly from translations. But I am firmly persuaded that the Greeks fully deserve all the admiration that is bestowed upon them, and that it is a very great and serious loss to be unacquainted with their writings. It is not by attacking them, but by drawing attention to neglected excellences in science, that I wish to conduct my argument.

One defect, however, does seem inherent in a purely classical education—namely, a too exclusive emphasis on the past. By the study of what is absolutely ended and can never be renewed, a habit of criticism towards the present and the future is engendered. The qualities in which the present excels are qualities to which the study of the past does not direct attention, and to which, therefore, the student of Greek civilization may easily become blind. In what is new



and growing there is apt to be something crude, insolent, even a little vulgar, which is shocking to the man of sensitive taste ; quivering from the rough contact, he retires to the trim gardens of a polished past, forgetting that they were reclaimed from the wilderness by men as rough and earth-soiled as those from whom he shrinks in his own day. The habit of being unable to recognize merit until it is dead is too apt to be the result of a purely bookish life, and a culture based wholly on the past will seldom be able to pierce through everyday surroundings to the essential splendour of contemporary things, or to the hope of still greater splendour in the future.

My eyes saw not the men of old ;  
And now their age away has rolled.  
I weep—to think I shall not see  
The heroes of posterity.

So says the Chinese poet ; but such impartiality is rare in the more pugnacious atmosphere of the West, where the champions of past and future fight a never-ending battle, instead of combining to seek out the merits of both.

This consideration, which militates not only against the exclusive study of the classics, but against every form of culture which has become static, traditional, and academic, leads inevitably to the fundamental question : What is the true end of education ? But before attempting to answer this question it will be well to define the sense in which we are to use the word 'education'. For this purpose I shall distinguish the sense in which I mean to use it from two others, both



perfectly legitimate, the one broader and the other narrower than the sense in which I mean to use the word.

In the broader sense, education will include not only what we learn through instruction, but all that we learn through personal experience—the formation of character through the education of life. Of this aspect of education, vitally important as it is, I will say nothing, since its consideration would introduce topics quite foreign to the question with which we are concerned.

In the narrower sense, education may be confined to instruction, the imparting of definite information on various subjects, because such information, in and for itself, is useful in daily life. Elementary education—reading, writing and arithmetic—is almost wholly of this kind. But instruction, necessary as it is, does not *per se* constitute education in the sense in which I wish to consider it.

Education, in the sense in which I mean it, may be defined as *the formation, by means of instruction, of certain mental habits and a certain outlook on life and the world*. It remains to ask ourselves, what mental habits, and what sort of outlook, can be hoped for as the result of instruction? When we have answered this question we can attempt to decide what science has to contribute to the formation of the habits and outlook which we desire.

Our whole life is built about a certain number—not a very small number—of primary instincts and impulses. Only what is in some way connected with these instincts and impulses appears to us desirable or



important ; there is no faculty, whether 'reason' or 'virtue' or whatever it may be called, that can take our active life and our hopes and fears outside the region controlled by these first movers of all desire. Each of them is like a queen-bee, aided by a hive of workers gathering honey ; but when the queen is gone the workers languish and die, and the cells remain empty of their expected sweetness. So with each primary impulse in civilized man : it is surrounded and protected by a busy swarm of attendant derivative desires, which store up in its service whatever honey the surrounding world affords. But if the queen-impulse dies, the death-dealing influence, though retarded a little by habit, spreads slowly through all the subsidiary impulses, and a whole tract of life becomes inexplicably colourless. What was formerly full of zest, and so obviously worth doing that it raised no questions, has now grown dreary and purposeless : with a sense of disillusion we inquire the meaning of life, and decide, perhaps, that all is vanity. The search for an outside meaning that can *compel* an inner response must always be disappointed : all 'meaning' must be at bottom related to our primary desires, and when they are extinct no miracle can restore to the world the value which they reflected upon it.

The purpose of education, therefore, cannot be to create any primary impulse which is lacking in the uneducated ; the purpose can only be to enlarge the scope of those that human nature provides, by increasing the number and variety of attendant thoughts, and by showing where the most permanent satisfaction is to be found. Under the impulse of a Calvinistic horror



of the 'natural man', this obvious truth has been too often misconceived in the training of the young; 'nature' has been falsely regarded as excluding all that is best in what is natural, and the endeavour to teach virtue has led to the production of stunted and contorted hypocrites instead of full-grown human beings. From such mistakes in education a better psychology or a kinder heart is beginning to preserve the present generation; we need, therefore, waste no more words on the theory that the purpose of education is to thwart or eradicate nature.

But although nature must supply the initial force of desire, nature is not, in the civilized man, the spasmodic, fragmentary, and yet violent set of impulses that it is in the savage. Each impulse has its constitutional ministry of thought and knowledge and reflection, through which possible conflicts of impulses are foreseen, and temporary impulses are controlled by the unifying impulse which may be called wisdom. In this way education destroys the crudity of instinct, and increases through knowledge the wealth and variety of the individual's contacts with the outside world, making him no longer an isolated fighting unit, but a citizen of the universe, embracing distant countries, remote regions of space, and vast stretches of past and future within the circle of his interests. It is this simultaneous softening in the insistence of desire and enlargement of its scope that is the chief moral end of education.

Closely connected with this moral end is the more purely intellectual aim of education, the endeavour to make us see and imagine the world in an objective



manner, as far as possible as it is in itself, and not merely through the distorting medium of personal desire. The complete attainment of such an objective view is no doubt an ideal, indefinitely approachable, but not actually and fully realizable. Education, considered as a process of forming our mental habits and our outlook on the world, is to be judged successful in proportion as its outcome approximates to this ideal ; in proportion, that is to say, as it gives us a true view of our place in society, of the relation of the whole human society to its non-human environment, and of the nature of the non-human world as it is in itself apart from our desires and interests. If this standard is admitted, we can return to the consideration of science inquiring how far science contributes to such an aim, and whether it is in any respect superior to its rivals in educational practice.

## II

Two opposite and at first sight conflicting merits belong to science as against literature and art. The one, which is not inherently necessary, but is certainly true at the present day, is hopefulness as to the future of human achievement, and in particular as to the useful work that may be accomplished by any intelligent student. This merit and the cheerful outlook which it engenders prevent what might otherwise be the depressing effect of another aspect of science, to my mind also a merit, and perhaps its greatest merit—I mean the irrelevance of human passions and of the whole subjective apparatus where scientific truth is



concerned. Each of these reasons for preferring the study of science requires some amplification. Let us begin with the first.

In the study of literature or art our attention is perpetually riveted upon the past : the men of Greece or of the Renaissance did better than any men do now ; the triumphs of foreign ages, so far from facilitating fresh triumphs in our own age, actually increase the difficulty of fresh triumphs by rendering originality harder of attainment ; not only is artistic achievement not cumulative, but it seems even to depend upon a certain freshness and *naïveté* of impulse and vision which civilization tends to destroy. Hence comes, to those who have been nourished on the literary and artistic productions of former ages, a certain peevishness and undue fastidiousness towards the present, from which there seems no escape except into the deliberate vandalism which ignores tradition and in the search after originality achieves only the eccentric. But in such vandalism there is none of the simplicity and spontaneity out of which great art springs : theory is still the canker in its core, and insincerity destroys the advantages of a merely pretended ignorance.

The despair thus arising from an education which suggests no pre-eminent mental activity except that of artistic creation is wholly absent from an education which gives the knowledge of scientific method. The discovery of scientific method, except in pure mathematics, is a thing of yesterday ; speaking broadly, we may say that it dates from Galileo. Yet already it has transformed the world, and its success proceeds with ever-accelerating velocity. In science



men have discovered an activity of the very highest value in which they are no longer, as in art, dependent for progress upon the appearance of continually greater genius, for in science the successors stand upon the shoulders of their predecessors ; where one man of supreme genius has invented a method, a thousand lesser men can apply it. No transcendent ability is required in order to make useful discoveries in science ; the edifice of science needs its masons, bricklayers, and common labourers as well as its foremen, master-builders, and architects. In art nothing worth doing can be done without genius ; in science even a very moderate capacity can contribute to a supreme achievement.

In science the man of real genius is the man who invents a new method. The notable discoveries are often made by his successors, who can apply the method with fresh vigour, unimpaired by the previous labour of perfecting it ; but the mental calibre of the thought required for their work, however brilliant, is not so great as that required by the first inventor of the method. There are in science immense numbers of different methods, appropriate to different classes of problems ; but over and above them all, there is something not easily definable, which may be called *the* method of science. It was formerly customary to identify this with the inductive method, and to associate it with the name of Bacon. But the true inductive method was not discovered by Bacon, and the true method of science is something which includes deduction as much as induction, logic and mathematics as much as botany and geology. I shall not



attempt the difficult task of stating what the scientific method is, but I will try to indicate the temper of mind out of which the scientific method grows, which is the second of the two merits that were mentioned above as belonging to a scientific education.

The kernel of the scientific outlook is a thing so simple, so obvious, so seemingly trivial, that the mention of it may almost excite derision. The kernel of the scientific outlook is the refusal to regard our own desires, tastes, and interests as affording a key to the understanding of the world. Stated thus baldly, this may seem no more than a trite truism. But to remember, it consistently in matters arousing our passionate partisanship is by no means easy, especially where the available evidence is uncertain and inconclusive. A few illustrations will make this clear.

Aristotle, I understand, considered that the stars must move in circles because the circle is the most perfect curve. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, he allowed himself to decide a question of fact by an appeal to aesthetico-moral considerations. In such a case it is at once obvious to us that this appeal was unjustifiable. We know now how to ascertain as a fact the way in which the heavenly bodies move, and we know that they do not move in circles, or even in accurate ellipses, or in any other kind of simply describable curve. This may be painful to a certain hankering after simplicity of pattern in the universe, but we know that in astronomy such feelings are irrelevant. Easy as this knowledge seems now, we owe it to the courage and insight of the first inventors of scientific method, and more especially Galileo.



We may take as another illustration Malthus's doctrine of population. This illustration is all the better for the fact that his actual doctrine is now known to be largely erroneous. It is not his conclusions that are valuable, but the temper and method of his inquiry. As everyone knows, it was to him that Darwin owed an essential part of his theory of natural selection, and this was only possible because Malthus's outlook was truly scientific. His great merit consists in considering man not as the object of praise or blame, but as a part of nature, a thing with a certain characteristic behaviour from which certain consequences must follow. If the behaviour is not quite what Malthus supposed, if the consequences are not quite what he inferred, that may falsify his conclusions, but does not impair the value of his method. The objections which were made when his doctrine was new—that it was horrible and depressing, that people ought not to act as he said they did, and so on—were all such as implied an unscientific attitude of mind ; as against all of them, his calm determination to treat man as a natural phenomenon marks an important advance over the reformers of the eighteenth century and the Revolution.

Under the influence of Darwinism the scientific attitude towards man has now become fairly common, and is to some people quite natural, though to most it is still a difficult and artificial intellectual contortion. There is, however, one study which is as yet almost wholly untouched by the scientific spirit—I mean the study of philosophy. Philosophers and the public imagine that the scientific spirit must pervade pages that bristle with allusions to ions, germ-plasms, and the



eyes of shell-fish. But as the devil can quote Scripture, so the philosopher can quote science. The scientific spirit is not an affair of quotation, of externally acquired information, any more than manners are an affair of the etiquette-book. The scientific attitude of mind involves a sweeping away of all other desires in the interests of the desire to know—it involves suppression of hopes and fears, loves and hates, and the whole subjective emotional life, until we become subdued to the material, able to see it frankly, without preconceptions, without bias, without any wish except to see it as it is, and without any belief that what it is must be determined by some relation, positive or negative, to what we should like it to be, or to what we can easily imagine it to be.

Now in philosophy this attitude of mind has not as yet been achieved. A certain self-absorption, not personal, but human, has marked almost all attempts to conceive the universe as a whole. Mind, or some aspect of it—thought or will or sentience—has been regarded as the pattern after which the universe is to be conceived, for no better reason, at bottom, than that such a universe would not seem strange, and would give us the cosy feeling that every place is like home. To conceive the universe as essentially progressive or essentially deteriorating, for example, is to give to our hopes and fears a cosmic importance which *may*, of course, be justified, but which we have as yet no reason to suppose justified. Until we have learnt to think of it in ethically neutral terms, we have not arrived at a scientific attitude in philosophy; and until we have arrived at such an attitude, it is

hardly to be hoped that philosophy will achieve any solid results.

I have spoken so far largely of the negative aspect of the scientific spirit, but it is from the positive aspect that its value is derived. The instinct of constructiveness, which is one of the chief incentives to artistic creation, can find in scientific systems a satisfaction more massive than any epic poem. Disinterested curiosity, which is the source of almost all intellectual effort, finds with astonished delight that science can unveil secrets which might well have seemed for ever undiscoverable. The desire for a larger life and wider interests, for an escape from private circumstances, and even from the whole recurring human cycle of birth and death, is fulfilled by the impersonal cosmic outlook of science as by nothing else. To all these must be added, as contributing to the happiness of the man of science, the admiration of splendid achievement, and the consciousness of inestimable utility to the human race. A life devoted to science is therefore a happy life, and its happiness is derived from the very best sources that are open to dwellers on this troubled and passionate planet.



## IX

### EARL BALDWIN

#### WORLD PEACE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

EARL BALDWIN said :

The notes of your Society say quite simply : ' This is the oldest Peace Society in the world. It was founded in 1816, at the close of the Napoleonic Wars.' The first of its objects is ' to promote to the utmost of its ability, permanent and universal peace throughout the world '.

These words may sound today after 120 years, sorrowful words, charged with the mockery, the vanity, of human wishes. I do not read them so. I am grateful to those pioneers who a century ago challenged the cynicism of their contemporaries and publicly avowed their faith in this courageous programme.

Your Society stands, and the best tribute I can pay to it is this : Had every other country a Peace Society which, after a century's endeavour, could point to a nation so thoroughly pacific as our own is today, then the millennium would really be round the corner.

' Permanent and universal peace.' The statesmen who gathered in those days at Vienna also dreamed of this, in their hard precise fashion ; they even planned for it, though it was not long before their plans were

waste paper. With the defeat of Napoleon a shadow that had been over Europe, passed away, 'and frightened kings crept out to feel the sun'.

Seventeen years ago another shadow passed away, and this time peoples as well as kings came out into the sunshine, and they and their leaders dreamed of peace and of an ordered society. Is it to remain a dream that slips through our longing arms, or can we give substance to plans that were made then?

Wherever men and women are gathered together at this time to talk among themselves, it will not be long before their thoughts turn to this question. Nor is it now a question for vague discussion at debating societies, or political summer schools, or even magniloquent University Unions. During the past year something has happened that has made the question a sharp, insistent, personal reality for each one of us.

The question before us is this : must the differences that arise from time to time between nations be left to force—can they ever be decided or settled in that way? Or shall we consciously and resolutely attempt to solve them by the ways of discussion and law that we all adopt as a matter of course for our private differences?

Now, that question will in the end be answered not by Governments, but by peoples, and before we expect an unequivocal answer we must see what the answer involves.

There may be Governments deliberately planning the future, leading reluctant or unsuspecting peoples into the shambles. It sometimes looks as if it were so. I confess that in my own political experience I have not encountered Governments possessed of all these



malevolent qualities. Most Governments seem to be not much better or much worse than the people they govern.

Nor, on the whole, am I disposed to conclude that the people are such an ineffective, helpless flock of sheep as those who claim to speak in their name often imply. They have, in fact, a way of making their opinions known and heard when they feel deeply.

I have a second reason for treating the subject as a personal reality. Most of us, when we consider the subject, do not see great movements, deep moral or legal issues, groupings of powers, or any of these 'huge cloudy symbols'.

We catch our breath and think of something far more intimate, much more dear to us—of the lives of our children and grandchildren, of our friends and companions, of the familiar sights and institutions of our own land, all the boundary-stones of our spiritual estate.

We live under the shadow of the last war, and its memories still sicken us. We remember what modern warfare is, with no glory in it but the heroism of man. We remember forcing ourselves to read the casualty lists.

Have you thought what it has meant to the world in recent years to have had that swath of death cut through the loveliest and the best of our contemporaries, how public life has suffered because those who would have been ready to take over from our tired and disillusioned generation are not there?

Perhaps we avert our thoughts from these terrors, and send them roaming over this 'dear, dear land' of

ours—Shakespeare was not ashamed thus to speak of his love of his native land, and why should we be?

We think, perhaps, of the level evening sun over an English meadow, with the rooks tumbling noisily home into the elms ; of the ploughman ‘ with his team on the world’s rim creeping like the hands of a clock ’, one of those garnered memories of the long peace of the countryside that a wise man takes about with him as a viaticum. To what risks do we expose our treasures ; irreplacable treasures, for you cannot build up beauty like that in a few years of mass-production.

Make no mistake, every piece of all the life we and our fathers have made in this land, everything we have and hold and cherish, is in jeopardy in this great issue.

It may seem rather unnecessary, especially before your Society, to remind anyone of these horrors ; the years do not efface our memories of what happened last time. But there is a generation growing up, coming to manhood, which never knew war. We who can still remember have a special responsibility upon us to do what we can in our own time so that they may never need to know war. It is for us to see to it that these things shall not be again.

It is not just a matter of choosing peace and not war. It is not difficult to choose peace. If to choose were all, you would no longer be a Society. But to make your choice effective, that is not so easy, as you and your founders have discovered.

What, may we also ask, is peace ? The philosopher who wrote for the education of princes said that ‘ peace was a breathing time giving a prince leisure to contrive, and furnishing ability to execute, military plans.’



That kind of peace is the tense quiet before a thunder-storm.

In recent years we have heard again such philosophy openly proclaimed in Europe : war as the normal life of nations, something noble and magnificent, and the preparation for it as the major business of the intervals of peace. We want no such armoured peace, but unless we are careful, it is all the peace we shall have.

There is another kind of peace, deeper, more real, appealing to the hearts and conscience of many men ; it is the peace of the inward-turning spirit. Some of us know men and women going about their daily affairs in whose eyes and bearing there is a lovely quiet, and strife is stilled in their presence.

Sometimes we know that this quiet is the peace after storm, that their eyes reflect a harmony hardly won after struggle and suffering, and we are fortunate when we can count such men and women among our friends. But sometimes is it not possible that this peace comes from turning our eyes away from the struggle of others ?

It is the great temptation in a troubled world, to turn inwards upon yourself, to cultivate that small private garden of your own personality, enriching it doubtless with many flowers, but shutting out all thought of what may be passing outside the wall.

That is a possible spiritual plan for a man, and I have heard it pressed with great eloquence and profound sincerity as a possible plan for a nation, and for our people. It is called the policy of isolation—or sometimes, to make it sound more modern and scientific, insulation. I had nearly forgotten, it is also called Splendid Isolation.

I offer as an alternative to this nice derangement of epithet a much truer description : Selfish Isolation. Why is it more splendid to be by yourself than to be with other people ? We might as well speak of Brilliant Collective Security. Let us keep our feet out of these adjectival enticements and walk in the way of truth unvarnished.

I would ask you to look first at a fairly large map of the world—in Mercator's projection. Do you not see in every continent of the world except Europe—and Europe backs on to Asia—and in every sea in the world, the answer ?

All those coloured places represent the heritage of our responsibility, not merely the responsibility of dominion, of acquisitiveness, of imperialism, or any other biased names, but the responsibility for the lives of human beings whom we are guarding and governing.

And I think we are governing them to the best of our ability and conscience, in a tradition gained of long experience, and that few of them would now choose any others to take our place. But, I am told, no one would touch them; the broils of other nations are not ours.

Does anyone think that a war between great nations, whoever they are, wherever their boundaries, can be a limited war, with someone to stop them when they go over the touchline, and that meanwhile we can trade profitably and happily with both belligerents alike in a prosperous neutrality.

Modern war between any two Powers is like one of the great convulsions of nature in the early geologic ages ; the map of the world has to be redrawn at the end.



Perhaps it may be wrong to say that we could not choose this policy of isolation if we would. Perhaps we could—but at what a price. If we wish to stand alone, to leave other nations alone, to use no influence towards a world order based on peace, we should have to guarantee our own security, to be prepared alone and from our own resources to meet any possible contingency, any possible combination against us.

There would be no system of insurance. Think of the expenditure, of the strain and burden on our own resources. Think how it would cripple all our higher peaceful endeavours. What would remain of our hopes of progress, our plans of social welfare? The man who makes no friends has no friends. We should have none by our side.

And for other material reasons friendship and goodwill are vital to us. The friendship and the confidence of the world in us are the basis of our commerce ; and by our commerce we exist. Our object is to open up the world, to come and go across the seas trading for mutual advantage. This is a lesson our fathers taught us ; so they built up our British commonwealth.

So, with the same enterprise must we continue in the future. We cannot bolt ourselves here in an armed citadel and survive.

The motive of self-interest, if nothing else, urges us away from such a policy. A co-operative effort for peace in which we play our part is not quixotism, it is not an idealistic desire to be the policeman of the world, it is plain common sense applied to the facts of things as they are.

But I do not accept the view that cold common

sense need be our only guide in policy today. We are a world-Power and we have responsibilities to the world. It is important sometimes to remind ourselves that power and place and possessions bring their duties as well as their rights and privileges.

There is no country in the world that, with its wide scattered frontiers, so much needs peace as we do, and the peace that we seek is the peace of the world, in your own words 'permanent and universal peace'. Alone we cannot find that peace, and no other peace in the end will be worth the having.

It is no egotistic nationalism on our part to believe that from our experience, from our traditions and political development, from something in the mixture of our national character, we have a contribution to make by which peace, when it comes, will be enriched.

In our old legal language there is a phrase for a brawler who would disturb society ; he is 'bound over to keep the peace'. In that judgement there is not law alone ; there is mercy, and more than mercy, there is an appeal to what the old theologians, in their happy and exact words, termed, the better nature of man.

A heavier duty is laid upon us. By the law of the Covenant we have signed, by mercy for those who suffer if we fail by our unquenchable hope in the reason, in the better nature of man—and without this hope and faith we cannot guide our lives—we are bound over to make the peace.

Just as we cannot have our peace alone, we cannot make the peace alone ; it takes two to make a quarrel, and it will take all to make the peace.



We cannot make the peace by good intentions, by resonant declarations, by pacific gestures and attitudes, however noble they may seem to us. It is the history of mankind that if our aspirations are to be made effective, they must be embodied in an institution, in a Church, in an Order, in a parliamentary assembly.

Those who drew up the treaty at the end of the war have been criticized for many things, but at least they faced the logic of their task in the framework of the League of Nations, with its details, and its recognition that there might be, on occasion, a backslider.

The League of Nations is not the first expression of the corporate desire of civilized peoples for peace, though it is, perhaps, even now, the most comprehensive. But it is the most workmanlike. Its creators knew that it was not sufficient to desire peace ; it might become necessary to enforce it.

We are members of the League, loyal members, steadily becoming clearer about its importance, its necessity, steadily becoming more resolute to base our policy upon the Covenants we entered into in its name, recognizing that their fulfilment may involve risks, but believing that there lies our duty, and that only so can we progress to the rule of law and order, and peace which the League was designed to give to a fevered world.

As we base our policy firmly upon the League, it is important that we should understand how it is designed, not in the details of its procedure, but in its broad essentials.

There are two matters in which the League is, I believe, distinguished from all other similar efforts in

the past. It provides for regular meetings of its members to discuss business of all kinds, upon much of which agreement is not difficult to reach.

The value of this is not always understood. It means that the representatives of the Powers come to know each other and to recognize points of view on matters where ultimate agreement is certain ; they are not called together only at moments of crisis when nerves and tempers are strained, and each man must manœuvre for position.

It is one of the difficulties of arrangements for conciliation in industry that, too frequently, the parties only meet when they are approaching a dispute ; they meet as sides in opposition, and not as partners in a joint enterprise ; they come to know each other as antagonists.

The League meets more often as partners in a joint enterprise ; its business is not always spectacular, and is not honoured by newspaper headlines, but it is solid, for it is nothing less than the gradual creation of the ' *communis sensus* ' of civilized mankind.

It is part of this procedure that the League has its own permanent machinery, its own permanent headquarters ; it is a corporate institution.

The other great ' note ' of this organization is that, in its constitution, it provides boldly, and yet with deliberation, a procedure for dealing with any Power that proposes to break the international convention of peaceful settlement for which the League stands.

Some people apparently find this rather shocking. They have no objection to the League while it discusses matters like the drug traffic, or issues good exhortations,



but shrink from it when it means business and does business. They consider that it should not meddle with some abstract thing called 'vital issues', issues affecting the honour and dignity of a nation, especially of a great nation.

What is it there for? Can an assembly of nations not recognize the honour and dignity of each of its members? Is every nation to be entitled to say 'this is a matter touching my honour, and I, and I alone, am judge of my conduct in that position'? If so, let us give up the miserable pretence.

It is true that this judgement may lead to action, cautionary action, restraining action—at the extreme to coercive action. We mean nothing by the League if we are not prepared in the end, and after grave and careful trial, to take action to enforce its judgement.

Look at the alternative. When I spoke, so inadequately, of the horrors of war, was it not clear that we must be prepared to take risks to prevent that evil thing stalking again across the world?

Our object is to end war, to end wars that may shake the world as we know it beyond all hope of recovery within the life of such as will still be alive at the end of another experience. The judgement of the world, given, as it must be, unanimously, in open Assembly, after long discussion, is no light and hasty thing.

The last few weeks have taught us what it means. May I call to your minds the solemn tones of St. Augustine's great words, *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*? That is the power of the League of Nations.

If the League only exists to keep things as they are it will become desiccated and crumble into dust. In

truth, it is a living organism, and like any other living organism, must be capable of development and change. That change must come primarily from within, be wrought within the framework of the League ; it must be an ordered evolution.

In Sir Samuel Hoare's speech at the Assembly at Geneva, on behalf of the Government and the people of this country, he recognized fully and squarely that in the present ordering of the world there may be arrangements which seem to deprive other nations of the chances they think they should have as members of the society of the world.

He instanced one thing, a more free access to raw materials, and to the economic development of backward countries. Those words were not spoken lightly. We know what they may mean for us, and we do not shrink from them. But we insist, and shall continue to insist, that any changes shall be examined within the League, shall receive the sanction of the League, and be carried out peacefully under the auspices of the League.

The League is living ; it also gains adherents : that is a sign of growth. Not long ago it was strengthened by the advent of the Union of Soviet Republics of Russia.

And so, despite defections, the League lives. It is still young, trying to find a firm foothold in a slippery world.

One would think in reading certain speeches that it was the easiest thing in the world to make fifty nations march in perfect step, as though they were fifty guardsmen on parade, each an exact replica of the other. Geneva is no Horse Guards' Parade.



Mr Eden and his colleagues represent fifty nations, with diverse traditions, every variety of economic circumstance, every degree of military strength and weakness, every sort of relationship with near neighbours and distant customers. The attempt at common and effective action to stop war which Geneva is now putting forth is without precedent in magnitude and difficulty.

In those difficulties old relations with old friends are being put to the strain. That is not surprising, and, if I may venture upon a colloquialism for which I may stand reproved by that arbiter of elegant language, the B.B.C., it is not necessary to become 'hot and bothered' about it.

I do not believe those old relations, those old friendships can be fundamentally impaired. There are elements, often vocal elements, in France that have not seen eye to eye with us in this matter, but there is solidarity between the two Governments as loyal members of the League, and that is what really matters.

It will not have escaped your reflection that, in our loyalty to the League, we take heavy responsibilities. Those responsibilities we must be in a position to discharge. That involves us in some hard thinking, and hard decisions. If we wish to bring peace on earth, we must keep our own feet on the ground.

We have a great, an immeasurably great, influence to throw in on the side of peace. But, unfortunately, the world is not yet in a state in which that influence can be merely moral. The peace, that 'permanent and universal peace' of which your Society speaks, is not yet made.

It must be founded upon order and upon law, and, so far, mankind has had still to rest its enforcement of law upon force. It may be suggested that example is all-sufficient. I wish with all my heart that I could believe this to be true.

I have, I trust, assured you of the Government's determination 'to promote, to the utmost of their ability, permanent and universal peace throughout the world' and have testified by their actions that this object of yours is foremost in their minds—and personally I have assured you of my own faith in your work. I hope that, if the sky has become overcast, you will find some encouragement in what I have said to work on through another year towards your noblest of ideals.

You must look ahead in a spirit of realism. You must work in the world as it now is and in our present state of civilization, striving to your utmost to improve it.

I am not asking you to search the skies, to look for clouds on the horizon, much less to give way to imaginings of possible grounds or signs of trouble ; nor to talk of such things. I think that all such talk of trouble is evil ; and it foment a feeling of nervous excitement which is itself an unhealthy condition. It is a condition which has been developing in some quarters overseas, and I do not like it.

Let your aim be resolute and your footsteps firm and certain. Do not fear or misunderstand when the Government say that they are looking to our defences. It does not mean that we look upon force as the judge and law-giver in the affairs of nations.

We do not dedicate ourselves to such evil, and there is here no spirit whatever of aggression. But weakness,



or wavering, or uncertainty, or neglect of our obligations—obligations for peace—doubts of our own safety give no assurance of peace, believe me—quite the reverse. Do not fear that it is a step in the wrong direction.

You need not remind me of the solemn task of the League to reduce armaments by agreement. I know and I shall not forget. But we have gone too far alone and must try to bring others along with us. I give you my word that there will be no great armaments.

Abroad our action will be sincerely welcomed by all who seek peace as giving greater certainty and security to the world, as assuring the world that we stand by our pledges, and promising a fuller and more effective use of our influence in the work of peace.

I have spoken clearly. We are 'bound over to make the peace', and it may not be an easy task. But we accept it.

## X

M. K. GANDHI

### INDIA'S HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

MAHATMA GANDHI said :

I must confess at the outset that I am not a little embarrassed in having to state before you the position of the Indian National Congress. I would like to say that I have come to London to attend this sub-committee, as also the Round Table Conference, when the proper time comes, absolutely in the spirit of co-operation and to strive to my utmost to find points of agreement. I would like also to give this assurance to His Majesty's Government, that at no stage is it, or will it be, my desire to embarrass authority ; and I would like to give the same assurance to my colleagues here, that however much we may differ about our viewpoints, I shall not obstruct them in any shape or form. Therefore, my position here depends entirely upon your goodwill, as also the goodwill of His Majesty's Government. If at any time, I found that I could not be of any useful service to the Conference, I would not hesitate to withdraw myself from it. I can also say to those who are responsible for the management of this Committee and the Conference that they have only to give a sign and I should have no hesitation in withdrawing.



I am obliged to make these remarks because I know that there are fundamental differences of opinion between the Government and the Congress, and it is possible that there are vital differences between my colleagues and myself. There is also a limitation under which I shall be working. I am but a poor humble agent acting on behalf of the Indian National Congress ; and it might be as well to remind ourselves of what the Congress stands for and what it is. You will then extend your sympathy to me, because I know that the burden that rests upon my shoulders is really very great.

The Congress is, if I am not mistaken, the oldest political organization we have in India. It has had nearly fifty years of life, during which period it has, without any interruption, held its annual session. It is what it means—national. It represents no particular community, no particular class, no particular interest. It claims to represent all Indian interests and all classes. It is a matter of the greatest pleasure to me to state that it was first conceived in an English brain. Allan Octavian Hume we knew as the father of the Congress. It was nursed by two great Parsees, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhoy Naoroji, whom all India delighted to recognize as its Grand Old Man. From the very commencement the Congress had Mussulmans, Christians, Anglo-Indians, I might say all religions, sects, and communities represented upon it more or less fully. The late Badruddin Tyebji identified himself with the Congress. We have had Mussulmans and Parsees as presidents of the Congress. I can recall at least one Indian Christian president at

the present moment, W. C. Bonnerji. Kalicharan Bannerji, than whom I have not had the privilege of knowing a purer Indian, was also thoroughly identified with the Congress. I miss, as I have no doubt all of you miss, the presence in our midst of Mr K. T. Paul. Although he never officially belonged to the Congress, he was a nationalist to the full and a sympathizer of the Congress.

As you know, the late Maulana Mohammed Ali, whose presence also we miss today, was a president of the Congress, and, at present, we have four Mussulmans as members of the Working Committee, which consists of fifteen members. We have had women as our presidents, Dr Annie Besant was the first, and Mrs Sarojini Naidu followed. We have her as a member of the Working Committee also ; and so, if we have no distinctions of class or creed, we have no distinctions of sex either.

The Congress has, from its very commencement, taken up the cause of the so-called 'untouchables'. There was a time when the Congress had at every annual session as its adjunct the Social Conference, to which the late Mr Ranade had dedicated his energies, among his many activities. Headed by him, you will find in the programme of the Social Conference, reform in connexion with the untouchables taking a prominent place. But in 1920, the Congress took a large step and brought the question of removal of untouchability as a plank on the political platform, made it an important item of the political programme. Just as the Congress considered Hindu-Moslem unity, thereby meaning unity amongst the people following all the



great religions, to be indispensable for the attainment of Swaraj, so also did the Congress consider the removal of untouchability as an indispensable condition for the attainment of full freedom.

The position the Congress took up in 1920 remains intact today and so you will see that the Congress has attempted from its very beginning to be what it has described itself to be, namely 'national' in every sense of the term.

If Your Highnesses will permit me to say it, in the very early stage, the Congress took up your cause also. Let me remind this committee that it was the Grand Old Man of India who sponsored the cause of Kashmir and Mysore, and these two great Houses, I venture, in all humility, to submit, owe not a little to the efforts of Dadabhoy Naoroji and the Congress. Even now the Congress has endeavoured to serve the princes of India by refraining from any interference in their domestic and internal affairs.

I hope that this brief introduction that I thought fit to give will serve to enable the sub-committee and those who are interested in the claims of the Congress, to understand that it has endeavoured to deserve the claim that it has made. It has failed, I know, often to live up to the claim, but I venture to submit, that if you were to examine the history of the Congress, you would find that it has more often succeeded, and progressively succeeded, than failed. Above all, the Congress represents, in its essence, the dumb, semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its seven hundred thousand villages, no matter whether they come from what is called British

India, or what is called Indian India. Every interest which, in the opinion of the Congress, is worthy of protection, has to subserve the interests of these dumb millions. You do find now and again an apparent clash between several interests. If there is a genuine and real clash, I have no hesitation in saying on behalf of the Congress that the Congress will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions. It is, therefore, essentially a peasant organization, or, it is becoming so progressively. You, and even the Indian members of the sub-committee, will, perhaps, be astonished to find that today the Congress, through its organization, The All-India Spinners' Association, is finding work for nearly 50,000<sup>1</sup> women in nearly 2,000 villages, and these women, are possibly fifty per cent Mussulman women. Thousands of them belong to the so-called untouchable classes. We have thus, in this constructive manner, penetrated these villages, and the effort is being made to cover every one of the 700,000 villages. It is a superhuman task, but if human effort can do so, you will presently find the Congress covering all of these villages and bringing to them the message of the spinning wheel.

This being the representative character of the Congress, you will not be astonished when I read to you the Congress mandate. I hope that it may not jar upon you. You may consider that the Congress is making a claim which is wholly untenable. Such as it is, I am here to put forth that claim on behalf of the Congress in the gentlest manner possible, but also in

<sup>1</sup> The latest figures of the Spinners' Association show 180,000 spinners.



the firmest manner possible. I have come here to prosecute that claim with all the faith and energy that I can command. If you can convince me to the contrary and show that the claim is inimical to the interests of these dumb millions, I shall revise my opinion. I am open to conviction, but even so, I should have to ask my principals to consent to that revision before I could usefully act as the agent of the Congress. At this stage I propose to read to you this mandate so that you can understand clearly the limitations imposed upon me.

This was a resolution passed at the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress :

‘ This Congress, having considered the provisional settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, endorses it, and desires to make it clear that the Congress goal of Purna Swaraj, meaning complete independence, remains intact. In the event of a way remaining otherwise open to the Congress to be represented at any conference with the representatives of the British Government, the Congress delegation will work for this goal, and in particular so as to give the nation control over the army, external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy, and to have a scrutiny by an impartial tribunal of the financial transactions of the British Government in India to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England and the right for either party to end the partnership at will : provided, however, that the Congress delegation will be free to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of India.’

Then follows the appointment. I have in the light of this mandate endeavoured to study as carefully as I was capable of studying the provisional conclusions arrived at by the several sub-committees appointed by the Round Table Conference. I have also carefully studied the Prime Minister's statement giving the considered policy of His Majesty's Government. I speak subject to correction, but so far as I have been able to understand, this document falls short of what is aimed at and claimed by the Congress. True, I have the liberty to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably in the interests of India, but they have all to be consistent with the fundamentals stated in this mandate.

I remind myself at this stage of the terms of what is to me a sacred settlement, the settlement arrived at at Delhi between the Government of India and the Congress. In that settlement, the Congress has accepted the principle of federation ; the principle that there should be responsibility at the centre, and has accepted also the principle that there should be safeguards in so far as they may be necessary in the interests of India.

There was one phrase used yesterday, I forget by which delegate, but it struck me very forcibly. He said, ' We do not want a merely political constitution.' I do not know that he gave that expression the same meaning that it immediately bore to me : but I immediately said to myself, this phrase has given me a good expression. It is true that Congress will not be, and personally speaking, I myself would never be, satisfied with a mere political constitution which to read



would seem to give India all she can possibly politically desire, but in reality would give her nothing. If we are intent upon complete independence it is not from any sense of arrogance ; it is not because we want to parade before the universe that we have now severed all connexion with the British people. Nothing of the kind. On the contrary, you find in this mandate itself that the Congress contemplates a partnership ; the Congress contemplates a connexion with the British people, but that connexion should be such as can exist between two absolute equals. Time was when I prided myself on being, and being called, a British subject. I have ceased for many years to call myself a British subject. I would far rather be called a rebel than a subject ; but I have now aspired, I still aspire, to be a citizen not in the Empire, but in a Commonwealth, in a partnership if possible ; if God wills it, an indissoluble partnership, but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another. Hence, you find here that the Congress claims that either party should have the right to sever this connexion, to dissolve the partnership. May I say—it may be irrelevant to the consideration, but not irrelevant to me—that as I have said elsewhere, I can quite understand responsible British statesmen today being wholly engrossed in domestic affairs, in trying to make both ends meet. We could not expect them to do anything less, and I felt, even as I was sailing towards London, whether we, in the sub-committee at the present moment, would not be a drag upon the British ministers, whether we would not be interlopers. And yet, I said to myself, it is possible that the British ministers

themselves might consider the proceedings of the Round Table Conference to be of primary importance even in terms of their domestic affairs. Yes, India can be held by the sword. But what will conduce to the prosperity of Great Britain, and the economic freedom of Great Britain : an enslaved but a rebellious India, or an India, an esteemed partner with Britain to share her sorrows, to take part side by side with Britain in her misfortunes ?

Yes, if need be, but at her own will, to fight side by side with Britain, not for the exploitation of a single race or a single human being on earth, but it may be conceivably for the good of the whole world. If I want freedom for my country, believe me, if I can possibly help it, I do not want that freedom in order that I, belonging to a nation which counts one-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other race upon earth, or any single individual. If I want that freedom for my country, I would not be deserving of that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak or strong, to the same freedom. And so I said to myself, whilst I was nearing the shores of your beautiful island that, perchance it might be possible for me to convince the British Ministers that India as a valuable partner, not held by force but by the silken cord of love, an India of that character might be conceivably of real assistance to you in balancing your budget, not for one year but for many years. What cannot the two nations do—one a handful but brave, with a record for bravery perhaps unsurpassed, a nation noted for having fought slavery, a nation that has at least claimed times without number



to protect the weak—and the other a very ancient nation, counted in millions, with a glorious and ancient past, representing at the present moment two great cultures, the Islam and Hindu cultures, and if you will, also containing not a small but a very large Christian population, and certainly absorbing the whole of the splendid Zoroastrian stock, in numbers almost beneath contempt, but in philanthropy and enterprise almost unequalled, certainly unsurpassed. We have got all these cultures concentrated in India, and supposing that God fires both Hindus and Mussulmans represented here with a proper spirit so that they close ranks and come to an honourable understanding, take that nation and this nation together, I again ask myself and ask you whether with an India free, completely independent as Great Britain is, an honourable partnership between these two nations cannot be mutually beneficial ; even in terms of the domestic affair of this great nation. And so, in that dreamy hope I have approached the British Isles, and I shall still cherish that dream.

And when I have said this perhaps I have said all, and you will be able to dot the i's, and cross the t's, not expecting me to fill in all the details, and tell you what I mean by control over the army, what I mean by control over external affairs, finances, fiscal and economic policy, or even the financial transactions which a friend yesterday considered to be sacrosanct. I do not take that view. If there is a stocktaking between incoming and outgoing partners, their transactions are subject to audit and adjustment, and the Congress will not be guilty of any dishonourable conduct or crime in saying that the nation should

understand what it is taking over and what it should not take over. This audit, this scrutiny, is asked for not merely in the interests of India ; it is asked for in the interests of both. I am positive that the British people do not want to saddle upon India a single burden which she should not legitimately bear, and I am here to declare on behalf of the Congress that the Congress will never think of repudiating a single claim or a burden that it should justly discharge. If we are to live as an honourable nation worthy of commanding credit from the whole world, we will pay every farthing of legitimate debt with our blood.

I do not think I should take you any farther through the clauses of this mandate and analyse for you the meaning of these clauses as Congressmen give them. If it is God's will that I should continue to take part in these deliberations, as the deliberations proceed I shall be able to explain the implications of these clauses. As the deliberations proceed I would have my say in connexion with the safeguards also. But, I think, I have said quite enough in having, with some elaboration and with your generous indulgence, Lord Chancellor, taken the time of this meeting. I had not intended really to take that time, but I felt that I could not possibly do justice to the cause I have come to expound to you, the sub-committee, and to the British nation of which we the Indian delegation are at present the guests, if I did not give you, out of the whole of my heart my cherished wish even at this time. I would love to go away from the shores of the British Isles with the conviction that there was to be an honourable and equal partnership between Great Britain and India.



I cannot do anything more than say that it will be my fervent prayer during all the days that I live in your midst that this consummation may be reached. I thank you, Lord Chancellor, for the courtesy that you have extended to me in not stopping me, although I have taken close upon forty-five minutes. I was not entitled to all that indulgence, and I thank you once more.

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# NOTES .

## I

### THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

#### TIME AND LIFE

Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-95), was one of the great English scientists of the nineteenth century. Religious institutions and effete traditions held sway over the minds of men in those days, and science met with strong opposition everywhere. Alive to the necessity of pursuing truth at all costs, Huxley fought for the scientific spirit of free inquiry, especially in the sphere of biology. There are writings which show the somewhat aggressive attitude he adopted to combat the general antipathy. There are others which reveal his genius and scientific acumen. To him more than to any other scientist of his time Darwin owes the popularization of his theory of evolution. The chapter, 'Time and Life', taken from his famous work *Man's Place in Nature*, shows him at his best as a steady and patient investigator of facts, and a writer of English at once simple and telling. In the India of today, Huxley's open-mindedness and respect for facts—the two essential characteristics of the scientific temper—would come as a much-needed corrective to the existing religious and social prejudices.

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**geologic time :** the history of the earth's crust and its strata so far as it could be made the object of investigation based on facts.

**dykes of molten matter :** hollow channels in the earth through which matter, liquefied by heat, flowed. This has reference to the heated condition of the earth before it became habitable for man.

PAGE 5.

**glacial epoch:** the name usually given to the period of the history of the earth when the major part of it underwent a marked lowering of temperature. It is said that northern Europe and North America were once entirely covered with ice exactly as the Polar region is now. The date of the Ice Age is approximately said to be 3000 or 4000 B.C. In view of the fact that the earth is millions of years old, this date is indeed recent !

PAGE 6.

**the legend of the Seven Sleepers :** According to Gregory of Tours, these sleepers were seven noble youths of Ephesus, who fled in the Decian persecution to a cave in Mount Celion, the mouth of which was afterwards blocked up with stones. They slept for 187 years until they were awakened by visitors to the cave.

PAGE 7.

**our solar system was once a nebulous mass :** From time immemorial, astronomers have tried to discover the origin of the universe. In Huxley's time, scientists accepted the 'nebular hypothesis', the theory which asserts that the solar system once consisted of a mass of incandescent vapour and clusters of stars, from which, by means of gradual condensation, the planets, of which the main body was the sun, were constituted. Even today, the 'nebular hypothesis' holds the field ; and we can do no better than quote a memorable extract from Sir James Jeans's *The Mysterious Universe* :

' We believe, nevertheless, that some two thousand million years ago this rare event took place, and that a second star, wandering blindly through space, happened to come within hailing distance of the sun. Just as the sun and moon raise tides on the earth, so this second star must have raised tides on the surface



of the sun. But they would be very different from the puny tides which the small mass of the moon raises in our oceans ; a huge tidal wave must have travelled over the surface of the sun, ultimately forming a mountain of prodigious height, which would rise ever higher and higher as the cause of the disturbance came nearer and nearer. And, before the second star began to recede, its tidal pull had become so powerful that this mountain was torn to pieces and threw off small fragments of itself, much as the crest of a wave throws off spray. These small fragments have been circulating around their parent sun ever since. They are the planets, great and small, of which our earth is one.

‘ The sun and the other stars we see in the sky are all intensely hot—far too hot for life to be able to obtain or retain a footing on them. So also no doubt were the ejected fragments of the sun when they were first thrown off. Gradually they cooled, until now they have but little intrinsic heat left, their warmth being derived almost entirely from the radiation which the sun pours down upon them. In course of time, we know not how, when, or why, one of these cooling fragments gave birth to life.’

PAGE 8.

the ‘ archetype ’ whereby the Creator was guided ‘ amidst the crash of falling worlds ’ : In ancient Greece, thinkers vied with one another in explaining the creation of the infinite variety of things of the universe. But the leading view was that a mighty architect had created the universe after an original model or pattern laid up in heaven. Thus each thing was fashioned after its ‘ archetype ’. But, due to lack of scientific investigation, the Greek mind could not understand violent geological changes, such as the sudden destruction of

rocks. Science progressed slowly, and so the only explanation that was prevalent was known as 'catastrophism',—the belief that at certain stages of its history, the earth was subject to violent catastrophe. The changes in organic life and the extinction of certain species were the results of such extraordinary cataclysms. Hence Huxley refers to 'the clash of falling worlds'. At each such catastrophe, the plants and animals were destroyed, but as the Creator had the 'archetypes' of everything He could re-create them again and again.

PAGE 13.

the 'Origin of Species', just published by Mr Darwin: Charles Darwin (1809-82), born at Shrewsbury, grandson of the physician and scientist, Erasmus Darwin, was educated at Edinburgh University and Christ's College, Cambridge. He embarked in 1831 as naturalist on the surveying ship, *Beagle*, bound for South America on a scientific expedition. It was on this voyage that he accumulated the various specimens of rocks and animal organisms which afterwards formed the basis of his researches. In 1859 he published *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection* which was regarded by many in those days as heretical and the work of a 'crank'. Darwin for the first time maintained and proved that it was not necessary to invoke the aid of the Creator to explain the emergence of new species, but that such emergence was due to the process of adaptation to environment in Nature which tends to the 'survival of the fittest'—that is, the preservation of those species which are able to hold their own in the struggle for existence. He called this process by the name of 'Natural Selection'. He was supported by leading scientists later, and so the mere theory of yesterday has become the very foundation of modern biological science.



PAGE 16.

**Lamarck's conjectures :** Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), French biologist and botanist, advanced the view that the inner needs of organisms tended, in course of time, to create by their very pressure, new organs and functions, and hence were the cause of evolution of new species. As Emerson puts it :

Striving to be man, the worm  
Mounts through all the spires of form.

Huxley does not seem to think much of this view, for he believes with Darwin, that it is the external compulsion of environment, rather than an inner urge in organisms, which is the cause of evolution.

## II

### ALFRED R. WALLACE THE LIVING ORGANISM

Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) was born at Usk, Monmouthshire, and educated at the Grammar School at Hertford. No University can claim him as its own, for he was far too poor to attend one. While still young he set off with H. W. Bates, a naturalist, on a trip to the Amazon for the collection of specimens. Though thirteen years younger than the great scientist Darwin, he invoked respect in him for his assiduous collection of facts and his inspired efforts at solving the mystery of the origin of species. In fact, he even worked out the theory of evolution before Darwin's own book saw the light of day. While he lay sick with fever at Ternate in the North Moluccas, he conceived in a flash of insight the idea of 'Natural Selection', and sent to Darwin by the next post a letter expounding the whole theory. Darwin was amazed and puzzled by the singular coincidence : his own MS. in

hand and the discovery of the theory by Wallace. 'If Wallace had my MS. sketch written out in 1842, he could not have made a better short abstract!' he wrote to Lyell. 'Even his terms now stand as heads of my chapters.' Each of them, however, recognized the other's independent genius, and hence published the famous joint communication to the Linnean Society on the theory of evolution, which is a lasting testimony to the nobility of the two great scientific souls.

The passage which we have chosen is a chapter from *Man's Place in the Universe*. Even to a mind not versed in science, it makes a distinct appeal, both for its description of the intricacy of life and the use of the scientific method.

#### PAGE 21.

**Herbert Spencer's latest definition:** Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) is best known as the founder of an evolutionary philosophy in which he tried to indicate the working of a single all-pervading principle of development in the whole universe. In his zeal for unifying the prevalent theories of knowledge in the light of this principle, he failed to collate and combine their essential characteristics. His definition of life, consequently, is neither complete nor reliable.

**One of the oldest definitions, that of Aristotle:** Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), the great Greek philosopher and scientist, was the first to study earnestly the nature of the living organism and was therefore the first biologist in the West. Hence his definition is perhaps the oldest that we know.

#### PAGE 23.

**travellers' tales, incredible and impossible as those of Sindbad the Sailor:** There are few tales so fantastic



and so incredible as those of the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, a book of stories translated from the Arabic. Some of these stories have become a part and parcel of literature. One of the most prominent of them is 'Sindbad the Sailor', which is about a merchant of Baghdad who went on seven adventurous voyages. Once he found himself on an island which was in reality a huge whale asleep, at another time he was carried away by an owl whose egg was fifty paces in circumference—such were the stories of his adventures. Wallace tells us that if we had no scientific evidence about the marvellous powers of reproduction of living organisms but had heard about them in the form of a rumour from some distant land, we should consider any explanation of them to be as fantastic as the tales of Sindbad's voyages.

PAGE 32.

**Clerk-Maxwell :** James Clerk-Maxwell (1831-79) was the first Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge. His well-known researches relating to electricity and magnetism have contributed considerably to the development of the theory of the conservation of energy.

PAGE 33.

naturalists say that they are generated in the sky by a fulgureous exhalation conglobed in a cloud by the circumfixed humour : This is a fanciful explanation of the origin of stone axes, given by a writer, Adrianus Tollius. In simpler words, this means that some shining vapour formed by a process of evaporation, was first turned into moist matter and hardened by heat and thus fashioned into stone axes ! But this statement, even when simplified, is so fanciful as to be almost unintelligible. Similarly unintelligible and utterly fanciful are, to the mind of Wallace, some of the so-called scientific explanations of the mystery of the reproductive cells of living organisms.

### III

## JOHN RUSKIN

### OF KINGS' TREASURIES

During John Ruskin's lifetime (1819-1900) rural England was fast becoming industrialized. Factories and workmen's sheds grew up on her green fields and open meadows. Those who loved the beauty of the countryside and had experienced the simple joys of rural life naturally protested against the devastating progress of industry. But none could stem its tide, for it meant the vast development of mechanical power in the country. Ruskin realized that the power of industries had come to stay, but being an ardent lover of the beautiful in nature and in life, he wished England to use this power in a noble manner, becoming to her character and race. This could only be done if her mind and heart were ennobled by high thinking. Thus in his writings and lectures and in this passage, chosen from *Sesame and Lilies*, he wanted to awaken the English people to the joy of living in touch with the high ideals embodied in art and literature. In his denunciation of the petty ambitions and selfish aims of a mechanical age, he was almost prophetic in his utterance. But whatever he said, he said to the last with the grace and courtesy of a 'gentleman of letters'.

PAGE 39.

**Of Kings' Treasures :** This is the sub-title of the lecture bearing the main heading 'Sesame'. Ruskin loved to give fantastic titles to his writings, sometimes English like *The Crown of Wild Olive*, and sometimes Latin like *Fors Clavigera* or *Munera Pulveris*. But all his titles had a definite and significant meaning. 'Sesame' was, in ancient Arabic, the word for a kind of grain on the utterance of the name of which men acquired the power of



opening barred doors. We are told in the famous story of Ali Baba and the forty thieves, that the poor workman Ali Baba, by means of this magic word, gained entrance into the brigands' treasure-cave and became the most wealthy merchant in the land. By calling the lecture 'Sesame', Ruskin suggested that here he wanted to explain the means by which any one of us could, like Ali Baba, unlock the doors to a treasure—the garnered wisdom of the world embodied in the writings of great minds. He thus intended to speak of the treasure of kings—not of material estates, but of the vast domain of thought.

**My first duty this evening :** The introductory sentence at once acquaints the reader that the passage is from a lecture. The occasion for it was an appeal for funds for building a library in connexion with the Rusholme Institute. Ruskin came forward to appeal to the public by delivering this lecture at the Rusholme Town Hall, near Manchester, in December 1864. Another famous lecture, 'Of Queens' Gardens', was delivered by him in aid of a fund for additional schools in Manchester, to afford facilities of education to the poor industrial class. Both these lectures were first published under the title of *Sesame and Lilies* in 1865.

#### PAGE 41.

**the last infirmity of noble minds :** This refers to the famous lines of Milton's 'Lycidas',

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise  
(That last infirmity of noble mind)  
To scorn delights and live laborious days.

#### PAGE 48.

**his inscription, or scripture :** Both these words are derived from the Latin verb *scribere* (to write). 'Scripture' originally meant whatever was written, but today it

usually means the Holy Bible. Ruskin not only uses the word in the original sense but also suggests that whatever is written with inspiration has—for the writer himself—as much permanent value as the Bible.

#### PAGE 49.

**the guardian of those Elysian gates :** In Greek literature, Elysium was the land of absolute happiness which the favoured ones of the gods were allowed to enter and where they lived an immortal life of perpetual bliss.

**that silent Faubourg St. Germain :** In the seventeenth century the Faubourg St. Germain was a residential district lying outside the gates of Paris. It was inhabited by the *élite* of French society.

#### PAGE 52.

**canaille :** means, by derivation, a pack of dogs. It is used in a contemptuous sense to mean a rabble or a mob. Hence Ruskin contrasts 'modern canaille' with 'ancient blood'.

### IV

#### CARDINAL NEWMAN

#### PARALLEL CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISHMEN

If science in the nineteenth century found stout defenders in men like Huxley and Wallace, religion discovered an outstanding leader in John Henry Newman (1801-1890). Sincere in his religious beliefs, he was anxious to convey them to others in a convincing language. Hence he was eager to develop a style of writing appropriate to his religious ideals. He is regarded by many as the stylist *par excellence*. His style is so subtly wrought that it is the subject of endless discussion. A stylist may be considered



an assiduous workman who polishes up whatever he makes. Such was Newman, always at pains to polish up his sentences, and so maintain a certain high standard of excellence in his prose. In the essay on the characteristics of Englishmen, he does not offer us oratorical fervour or attractive 'purple passages'. He displays the power of expressing ideas in a style at once simple but stately, aided by homely similes, and with a warmth of sympathy for the subject in hand.

The essay is taken from a series of letters which Newman wrote in 1855. The British had suffered many reverses in the ghastly Crimean War. The press and the public were loud in their denunciation of ambitious statesmen of the time. Newman, however, in his letters to the press, offered his view that it was not the fault of statesmen. He contended that the British character and constitution were such that the British, prosperous as they were and advanced in the sciences and useful arts of peace, were naturally and inevitably inefficient in methods of war.

#### PAGE 59.

*Optat ephippia bos*: the quotation is from the epistles of Horace. It means 'the ox desires the horse's harness'.

*Attica*: the name given by the Greeks to ancient Athens, which was considered to be the home and nursery of Greek art and culture.

#### PAGE 60.

the sons of Oedipus: they are, as mentioned in Greek literature, Eteocles and Polynices, who agreed to reign alternately each year after the death of their father. When Eteocles refused to carry out his pledged word, Polynices waged war against him. Finally they killed each other in single combat.

## V

### JOHN STUART MILL ON LIBERTY

John Stuart Mill (1806-73), began his career as a clerk in India House where finally, in 1856, he became head of his department. But he is known to the world not for writing up ledgers but for testing the fundamental tenets of our morality and civilization by the vigorous exercise of reason. So passionate and so impersonal was his love of reasoning that Gladstone called him 'The Saint of Rationalism'. As a literary critic has put it, 'he excels in giving precision to an idea, in disentangling a principle, in recovering it from under a crowd of different cases, in refuting, in distinguishing, in arguing'. The chapter which we have chosen from his famous essay on Liberty (1859), bears ample testimony to these powers of argument.

Further, he is never one-sided. He is prepared to keep an open mind on all questions. Let the young Indian student follow his debate on 'Society' and 'the Individual', watch how he begins with the restraint of society over the individual, then modifies it by considering the right of private judgement, then again sees the point of view of society in curbing individual freedom for the establishment of high traditions.

J. S. Mill is esteemed not only as a writer but also as an ethical thinker. He is known for his defence of utilitarianism founded by his father, James Mill, and Jeremy Bentham—the theory that practical utility or prudence is the sole criterion of rightness of actions.

PAGE 73.

Though society is not founded on a contract :  
Mill here wants to deny the view that society originally



is an artificial institution based on a contract formed by individuals for the realization of their ends. It was put forward by Hobbes, then supported by Rousseau in his book *Du Contrat Social*. The publication of it had profound influence on French thought and is said to have paved the way for the French Revolution.

PAGE 85.

as in the fashion of grossness which succeeded, in the time of Charles II, to the fanatical moral intolerance of the Puritans: After the execution of King Charles I, England was governed by Cromwell and his soldiers, who were called Roundheads. Most of them belonged to the Puritan party, which was originally founded in the time of Elizabeth by men who were not pleased with the national church and urged for its further 'purification'. When the Puritan party, headed by Cromwell, commanded the State, they carried out their aim of purification of both Church and life by the exercise of a fanatical moral rectitude. During the Restoration in the reign of Charles II, a natural reaction to such intolerance set in, and as the Puritans were no longer in power, the people became much more gross and immoral than before.

PAGE 91.

**Calvinists and Methodists:** Calvinists were the followers of the great French theological writer and reformer, Johannes Calvin (1509-64). He became the dictator of a new kind of theocracy and preached his own doctrine relating to the principle of the Christian Church.

Methodists were originally members of a religious society established at Oxford in 1729 by John and Charles Wesley and other members of the University. Its primary aim was the promotion of piety, but later on it merged into a regular movement of reaction against the apathy of the Church of England.

PAGE 96.

**Sabbatarian legislation :** legislation by which people are enjoined to refrain from regular work on one particular day of the week. The term 'Sabbatarian' is an adjectival form of the word sabbath originally derived from the Hebrew 'shabath' which means to rest.

## VI

### OSCAR WILDE

#### ON SUFFERING

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde, author and playwright, was born in Dublin in 1856 and died in Paris in 1900. Having distinguished himself in classics at Trinity College, Dublin, Wilde went to Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1874, and won the Newdigate prize in 1878 with his poem *Ravenna*. Brilliantly intellectual as he proved himself to be at Oxford, his career there was chiefly remarkable for the part he played in what came to be known as the Aesthetic Movement. He adopted what appeared to undergraduates to be an effeminate pose, scorning sports, wearing his hair long, and decorating his rooms with peacocks' feathers, blue china and other *objets d'art*. Along with Whistler, he propounded the theory of *art for art's sake*, affected a lackadaisical manner, and was often seen walking up Piccadilly wearing a green carnation. For this affected aestheticism he got when at Oxford a ducking in the Cherwell and a wrecking of his decorated room there. Though as the originator of the new cult of aestheticism he excited ridicule all round, yet as the author of several works of undoubted dramatic and literary ability, he became one of the most prominent personalities of late Victorian times.



It cannot be denied that Wilde's aesthetic movement left a permanent influence on English decorative art which the school of Rossetti and Morris had started before him. But, as he himself confesses in his *De Profundis*, his craving for the unconventional and the perverse eventually led to his downfall. For this open defiance of the prevalent code of morality and for the wild acts which, 'senseless and sensual' as he himself called them, he was led to commit in pursuance of his aesthetic theory, he was prosecuted at the Old Bailey and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment. It was a melancholy ending to what was undoubtedly a singularly brilliant literary career. It was during his incarceration in Reading Gaol that he wrote his *De Profundis*, from which epoch-making work we have extracted the piece given here.

## PAGE 104.

**She and my father had bequeathed :** Wilde's mother was well known in Dublin as a graceful writer of verse and prose who adopted the pen name of *Speranza*. His father, Sir William Wilde, was a famous Irish surgeon who had made a name for himself in literature, art and archaeology.

**a low byword :** name of a person or place used to typify something mean or iniquitous or foolish.

## PAGE 105.

**The thin beaten-out leaf of tremulous gold :** electroscope, an instrument for detecting the presence and quality of electricity.

**to wash the feet of the poor :** In some Christian sects it is the custom for the priest to wash the feet of the poor at Christmas-time to manifest his sense of humility and service to the poor. The custom originated in Christ's washing the feet of his Apostles.

## VII

A. C. BENSON

### FROM A COLLEGE WINDOW

Among contemporary English essayists, A. C. Benson occupies a high place. He does not, like Mill, shine at argument, nor like Ruskin, prepare for us a majestic pageant of phrase and sentence. He is the homely essayist, taking the reader into his confidence by the spontaneous charm of his prose. Though living in a different world, he brings the rare atmosphere of Addison and Steele to us by his polite style. But in addition to his polite manner and charm, there is a personal note in whatever he writes—a characteristic which typifies the modern essay as a distinct form of composition.

Benson's contribution stands out in striking contrast to some of the slipshod journalism of our day. The selection we have chosen was one of his essays written for the 'Cornhill Magazine'. It was later published in a book of essays, *From a College Window*, whose title the selection bears.

PAGE 114.

**Edward FitzGerald :** (1809-83), became well known in the mid-nineteenth century by his English poetic version of the 'Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám'. He was almost dragged into fame by this book, for he lived a retired life in Suffolk. He was a great friend of Carlyle, Thackeray and the Tennysons.

PAGE 115.

**A full-fledged dilettante :** one who devoted his entire time to the love of fine arts. 'Dilettantism' is used, often in a depreciating sense, to mean the desultory and amateurish pursuit of art.



PAGE 116.

a big close, half orchard, half garden, with bird-haunted thickets and immemorial trees, bound by a slow river: evidently Benson has in mind the grounds of a college at Cambridge. Many colleges are situated on the bank of the river Cam, which flows through the town. Benson has tried to convey the 'old-world' atmosphere of the surroundings of some of these institutions, enhanced by the beauty of the winding stretches of slow-moving river.

PAGE 120.

like Melchizedek, without beginning of days, or end of life: Melchizedek, in Genesis xiv. 18, is said to be the King of Salem and a High Priest unto whom even the Patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. He represents the highest type of self-originating power, for he is 'without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life'.

PAGE 121.

As Pater said: Walter H. Pater (1839-94) began his literary career by contributing in 1867 to the 'Westminster Review'. Subsequently he published his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* which at once brought him fame. He is regarded as one of the greatest of nineteenth century writers, and is best known for his philosophy and imaginary portraits and his rhythmic style.

## VIII

BERTRAND RUSSELL

### THE PLACE OF SCIENCE IN A LIBERAL EDUCATION

There is perhaps no living thinker who has been so versatile and whose life has been such an adventure in

ideas as Bertrand Russell's. The most abstruse mathematics, a courageous pacifism in the teeth of world war, daring social reform and bold educational experiments—all these he has explained with a convincing lucidity. No wonder then, that he has gained recognition which the worthiest peer of the realm would envy.

Russell, however, will be remembered not so much for his versatility as for the scientific outlook he helped to develop in all matters concerning society at large. With characteristic vigour and honesty he systematically denounced the blind acceptance of the prevalent canons and conventions of society. In other words, he insisted on a disinterested love of discovering the truth for its own sake and facing the unwelcome facts of existence, however much they might upset us or overthrow our pet notions of life. In the selection which we have chosen from his book *Mysticism and Logic*, Russell defines this scientific outlook and shows us how its cultivation has educational value on a par with the advantages of a purely classical and literary culture.

#### PAGE 137.

**the Renaissance:** In Italy in the fourteenth, and later in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, scholars and thinkers began to study and reinterpret the old classical writers. The intellectual lethargy of the age was shaken by the inspiration which some of the alert and responsive minds derived from such classical study, and there followed, dating from the fourteenth century, a revival of art and letters, which is known as the 'Renaissance' (a French word meaning 'rebirth').

**Galileo:** Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), Italian astronomer and physicist, is said to have revolutionized medieval thought in Europe by his various scientific discoveries and placed it on a firm rational basis for the first time.



Hence Russell considers that the scientific method, as an instrument of actual discovery, originated in Europe in the course of Galileo's work. He agreed with Copernicus that the earth moves round the sun ; and this brought him into immediate conflict with the Church. The Church sent him to prison, but even during his trial, he is said to have muttered, ' And yet the earth moves ', even though the Church stoutly denied it.

PAGE 139.

Aristotle : see page 180.

PAGE 140.

**Malthus's doctrine of population :** Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) is best known for his book *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. In this essay, he explains his doctrine that population must necessarily increase beyond the means of subsistence and hence a new morality should be developed to check over-population. Russell refers to the scientific method which Malthus used in expounding his ideas. It was because of the systematic way in which he stated his principles that he exerted a powerful influence on the social and political thought of his time and his work subsequently raised furious controversy.

**Darwin :** see page 178.

## IX

### EARL BALDWIN

### WORLD PEACE AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, born in 1867, was leader of the Conservative Party and was for some years

Prime Minister of England. He is said to have won the heart of his country, not by any glamorous political move, but by the slow triumph of individual statesmanship. He is great in the sense that he represents all that is best in English public life. Till the last of his days, he will only aspire to be a thorough Englishman.

The fact of his being so thoroughly English has considerably helped him as a writer of fine prose. For the simplicity, sincerity and nobility of mind which have so largely contributed to the success of his statesmanship, have also characterized his writings and speeches. Whether he speaks of the English countryside or of the destiny of the nation, his utterances seem to be the expression of his heart. The address on 'World Peace' is a notable one which he delivered to the Peace Society at the Guildhall, London, on 31 October 1935.

PAGE 148.

The philosopher who wrote for the education of princes: evidently the reference is to Niccolo Machiavelli, the famous Florentine statesman and political philosopher. He was the author of the *Prince* written in 1513, in which he expounded his principles of statecraft and visualized a united Italy. From the political point of view the *Prince* was considered 'immoral' in the diplomatic circles of those days. Yet statesmen of all subsequent times have referred to it in their political affairs.

PAGE 152.

By the law of the Covenant we have signed: the Covenant which forms the first twenty-six articles of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 under which the prominent countries of Europe formed the League of Nations.



The League's objective is to promote international co-operation, peace and security. It has its headquarters in Geneva.

## X

### M. K. GANDHI

#### INDIA'S HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

M. K. Gandhi's life and career are so well known to every Indian, young and old, that a bare outline is all that is necessary here.

Gandhi was born in 1869, and was educated in India. He went to England when he was eighteen to join one of the Inns of Court and in due course was called to the Bar. On his return from England he went to South Africa and made a name for himself in the law-courts there. What brought him into world-wide prominence was the leading part he took in the affairs of his countrymen who were permanently settled in South Africa. To secure their elementary civil and political rights he more than once organized passive resistance and later on formed a colony of idealistic farmers, called the Phoenix Colony, modelled after the famous St George's Guild of Ruskin. Once, on a railway journey, a friend happened to give him Ruskin's *Unto this Last*. He was so impressed with the social ideals preached therein that his entire outlook on life was changed. To this book may be directly traced the inspiration of his great khaddar movement. Besides Ruskin he was indebted to Tolstoy for his other great principle of life. It was to Tolstoy's exposition of the Christian ideal of non-resistance that Gandhi's own philosophy of non-violence may be ultimately traced.

From South Africa Gandhi returned to India in 1915 and joined the greatest political organization of India—the Indian National Congress, of which he is now the acknowledged leader and mentor. Consequently, no one can speak with greater authority on the policy and ideals of the Congress than Gandhi. This is why we have selected his inaugural address at the Round Table Conference for our book.

PAGE 164.

**Allan Octavian Hume** : was a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service. Before any other Indian politician he conceived the idea of forming the all-India political organization which developed into the Indian National Congress. It was Hume who composed the first national song of India, 'Sons of Ind', which we believe to be so necessary for the cultivation of true Indian manhood, that we reproduce here its five golden stanzas in the hope that every university student will commit them to memory.

Sons of Ind ; why sit ye idle,  
Wait ye for some Deva's aid ?  
Buckle to, be up and doing !  
Nations by themselves are made !

Yours the land, lives, all at stake, though .  
Not by you the cards are played ;  
Are ye dumb ? Speak up and claim them !  
By themselves are nations made !

What avail your wealth, your learning,  
Empty titles, sordid trade ?  
True Self-Rule were worth them all !  
Nations by themselves are made.



Whispered murmurs doubly creeping,  
Hidden worms beneath the glade,  
Not by such shall wrong be righted !  
Nations by themselves are made.

Sons of Ind, be up and doing,  
Let your course by none be stayed ;  
Lo ! the dawn is in the East ;  
By themselves are nations made.

**Sir Pherozeshah Mehta :** a great orator and a leading figure in the politics of India. After his brilliant academic career in India, he left for England and was shortly afterwards called to the Bar. He practised at the Bombay High Court and became before long the leader of its Bar, but his splendid energies and magnificent personality were chiefly employed in the single-minded furtherance of his country's cause. Both in the smaller field of the civic affairs of Bombay and the wider sphere of Indian politics he became a shining light, particularly in the sphere of the Indian National Congress. By his life-long services and devotion to the municipal affairs of his own city of Bombay, he set an example to the rest of India in ideal citizenship.

**Dadabhoy Naoroji :** was popularly known as the Grand Old Man of India. After a remarkable scholastic career, he started life in the teaching profession. Later on he gave it up and left for England and there devoted the most fruitful years of his life to furthering the cause of freedom for India and demanding political rights for his countrymen. He was the first Indian to sit in the British House of Commons. It was he who propounded the doctrine 'Good government is no substitute for self-government', which ever since has been the slogan of the Indian National Congress.

**Badraddin Tyebji :** was for many years a judge

of the Bombay High Court. He is, however, best known as the Moslem leader of the Indian National Congress.

PAGE 165.

**Dr Annie Besant :** the widow of an Anglican clergyman. She first came into prominence in England when she was prosecuted with Charles Bradlaugh for publishing *Fruits of Philosophy*. She was, however, best known as a member of the Theosophical Society, of which she was the President for a number of years. She took an active part in Indian politics and once presided at a session of the Indian National Congress.

**Mrs Sarojini Naidu :** as a poet of great gifts, first made a name for herself in English Literature. However, in India she is best known for her whole-hearted activities in the cause of the Congress.



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